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ABSTRACT

This research-in-dialogue study ascertained the viewpoints of representatives of 31 groups of East Kimberley (Australia) Aboriginal people on education, their priorities as to what issues government should be addressing, and their suggested strategies for achieving a system of education which meets perceived needs of the remote Aboriginal community. Findings indicated that Aboriginal East Kimberley people were acutely aware of the need for children to acquire the same competencies as other children in the mainstream of Australian society. However, they desired a balanced education that would transmit cultural values in addition to new skills and knowledge. The following emerged as priorities in developing more effective education for the region: (1) teach/inform Europeans about Aboriginal people of the region, (2) improve standard Australian English levels and acknowledge and provide for diverse language/cultural backgrounds, (3) provide on-site education, and (4) provide for recreation needs with education for leisure. Specific implementation strategies suggested providing courses for teachers/others intending to work in the region; involving traditional people in such courses; employing/training more Aboriginal teachers; mixing and communicating; establishing town language centers; establishing community centers for post secondary trades, technical, and tertiary education in the region; and providing support for cultural artistic and sporting needs through community centers. Appendices include data on the study sample and the survey instrument. (NEC)

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Aboriginal Viewpoints on Education:

A Survey in the East Kimberley Region

KAYE THIES

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ABORIGINAL VIEWPOINTS ON EDUCATION

A Survey in the East Kimberley Region

Kaye Thies

Research Series Number 5
National Centre for Research on Rural Education
University of Western Australia
1987

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371'.009941'4.

"We like to see people now from today on, our younger kid, going to school. We all here now, no matter who; we in the same land, Gadiya and Blakbala. We should stay level; stop level; not the one up, the one down.

We live all in Australia, all round no matter where - people in city or big town, or bush community like this. We should stop level and even, you know."

Gurindji man, former head stockman, now a health worker, father of eight and guardian of two. Illiterate, and learning to read.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Among forward thinking people in the Aboriginal community of the East Kimberley region - and outside of it for that matter - there is evidence of some impatience with research programmes of esoteric value or of little direct significance to people in need. Priorities in research funding and economy of research effort, they feel, need to be directed towards providing immediate and long term improvements in life conditions for Aboriginal people. This means especially towards developing an education which will enable young Aboriginal people to have adequate control over the quality of their lives and the lives of those for whom they are immediately responsible.

I must acknowledge the cautious encouragement of Aboriginal people and organisations both inside and outside the region right from the beginning of this project (National Aboriginal Conference, National Aboriginal Education Committee, Kimberley Land Council, Aboriginal Consultative Group on Education). The views of these groups ensured that grass roots opinions were the focus of this study. From the outset they impressed on me the importance Aborigines attach to the need for research efforts to be directed towards issues of relevance and importance to themselves. It was stressed that the Aboriginal position with regard to education can only begin to be clarified when the people themselves have opportunities to state what their problems are. Thus the finding of viable solutions to problems is directly dependent on the involvement of Aboriginal people in determining what the issues are.

That this report was able to cover such extensive ground, and canvass directly such a wide body of grass roots opinion, has been due to the interested participation of the Aboriginal communities of the East Kimberley.

At a more specific level my thanks are due to the steering committee, particularly the regional members, for their guidance in planning the best ways of introducing ourselves and the study to the people of the region, and in providing advice on protocol. Steering committee members were:

Mrs O Bieundurry	East Kimberley outstation
Ms D Brown	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
Mr J Budby	Aboriginal Education Department
Mr F Chulung	National Aboriginal Conference
Mrs P Gordon	Town fringe group
Mr A McKenzie	Kimberley Land Council
Mr R Nanala	East Kimberley Aboriginal Community
Dr E Stringer	WAIT Aboriginal Studies Centre

My particular thanks to Mrs Olive Bieundurry who travelled to Perth with her two children in order to prepare and narrate for the project the Walmadjarri translation of the introductory videoletter. Mrs Bieundurry also interpreted on several occasions for us in the field and has continued through a time of personal bereavement and duress to be a source of advice through the second and subsequent part of the project.

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The effectiveness of the first round of data gathering at group meetings was due in no small measure to the involvement of Ms Judith Butters as a research assistant. She played an important part in the preparation and narration of the introductory videoletter as well as in field meetings, contributing her local knowledge and expertise.

During the second round of field work which involved extensive interviewing, three local field workers were employed by the project. I would like to acknowledge the able assistance of Mrs Pearl Gordon in the Kununurra area, and for shorter periods Mrs Peggy Patrick in the Wyndham/Bow River/Turkey Creek area, and Mrs June Sturt in the Hall's Creek/Ringer's Soak area.

I would like to thank Mr Reg Birch for his assistance in Wyndham and both the Birch family and Trust family for their hospitality and assistance.

In Kununurra I would like to thank the staff of the Balangarri/ Warringarri Resource Centre for their interest and help with arranging meetings and contacts, particularly Mr Steven Irvine and Steering Committee members, Mr Frank Chulung, and Mr and Mrs P. Hunter.

In Hall's Creek I would like to thank Ngoonjuwah staff for facilitating group meetings, and in particular Ms Sandra Butters.

I would particularly like to thank those people in towns, communities and outstations who were hosts to both me and other research workers on both field trips, making the stay a fuller and more enjoyable one.

I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and helpfulness of Government and Catholic Education offices in providing information, and many education professionals in the region, both Aboriginal and Gadiya, who went out of their way to show interest and/or provide us with additional information.

On the home front, I must also thank Mrs Polly Edwards for the reassuring efficiency with which the administrative and clerical details of the study - often at long distance - were accomplished.

Finally, the importance of the freedom to conduct the survey in the manner judged on the advice of the East Kimberley Aboriginal people to be most appropriate - if sometimes a far cry from the more conventional methods of the mailed questionnaire/structured interview - cannot be underestimated. For this I sincerely thank the director of the National Centre for Research on Rural Education, Mr Derrick Tomlinson.

Kaye Thies

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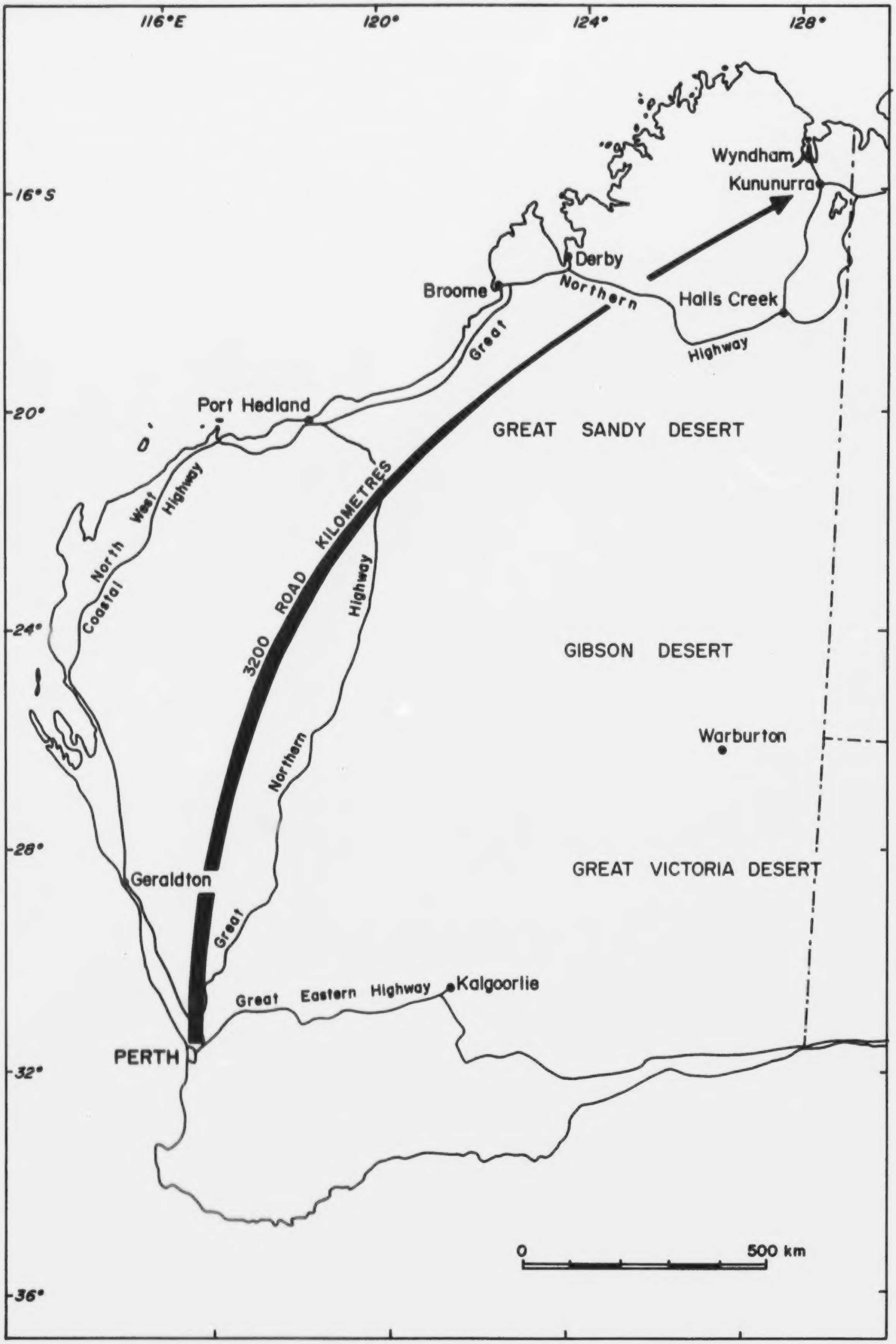
Figure 1: Western Australia—showing distance from Perth to Kununurra, the administrative centre for the East Kimberley Region



Note: Some variation will be found in this report in the spelling of Aboriginal words. This is indicative of the 'state of the art' (or science) of establishing an accepted written form or forms of the modern Aboriginal languages of the Kimberley today. There are many reasons why no standard spelling is at present established; it would be presumptuous of any 'Gadiya'[1] to assume the authority to establish such standards or conventions without collaboration with speakers of these languages.

In this report I have used, in general, spelling offered or preferred by literate respondents in each area. The spelling *'Kija'* and *'Walmajarri'*, used by some but not all respondents, is used throughout the text in reference to these two languages, as recommended in the list 'Recommended Spellings of Kimberley Aboriginal Language Names' compiled by W. McGregor for the newly established Kimberley Language Resource Centre. This spelling is used at present in established and developing literacy programmes.

The need for more frequent interested, organised and recorded intellectual discussion and decisions on language matters by Aboriginal traditional language speakers is urgent, if Aboriginal aims to improve the degree of their control and participation in education are to be achieved.

---

1. Non Aboriginal person.

PART 1

THE RESEARCH

"Gadiya never give blakbala chance before to talk up for what kind of Education they want for their kids. This is the first time dey ask olabat watkain Education dey want. They bin just purrum in dem - da Gadiyakain skuling an it's not workin out too good."

"Yeah dat tru tu; it not working out too good, longtaim[1]."

East Kimberley women

---

1. Since a long time ago.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Governments and educationists in Australia are undertaking the improvement of educational services in remote areas. In doing so they have taken the view that community involvement not only is desirable, but is essential. For their part, remote communities have become increasingly vocal in their concern that educational opportunities on all fronts should be available to people in their home localities. In most places, however, they are not.

Recognition of the inadequacies, both by Governments and communities themselves, has been the essential first step towards improving the quality of education in remote areas. The next step must be dialogue between educational providers, mainly government authorities, and people within communities to establish bases for cooperation. Planning for effective educational services must keep in mind the goals and aspirations of the people as well as the broader public purposes and objectives.

There is necessity for enquiry into how the existing system of education falls short of what might reasonably be expected by people in remote communities. What in fact do they see as the shortcomings of the system? What are their aims, aspirations and priorities? How can specific shortcomings be put right? How best can the situation be improved?

For some time now such bodies as the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) have been drawing attention to the need for formal education policies to be flexible enough to cater for the diversity of groups within Aboriginal Australia. In its submission to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education (1979:11) the NAEC categorised the living situations of Aboriginal Australians according to their degree of geographic, social and economic separation from other Australians. It referred to tradition-oriented communities as those Aboriginal 'people who have the greatest geographic and social separation from the rest of Australian society'.[1] Such communities played a major part in the research which is reported here.

This study was an investigation of factors which might contribute to, or inhibit the achievement of, an adequate educational provision for people living in remote settlements in Western Australia. It was concerned with linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as with distance. It was undertaken in a remote locality which has a predominantly Aboriginal population. The project was concerned directly with grass roots perceptions and problems, and so did not involve non-Aboriginal Australian teaching personnel. It has made little reference to non-Aboriginal Australians, for two reasons:

(a) permanently resident non-Aboriginal Australians are a minority in the region;

---

[1] See Appendix 1

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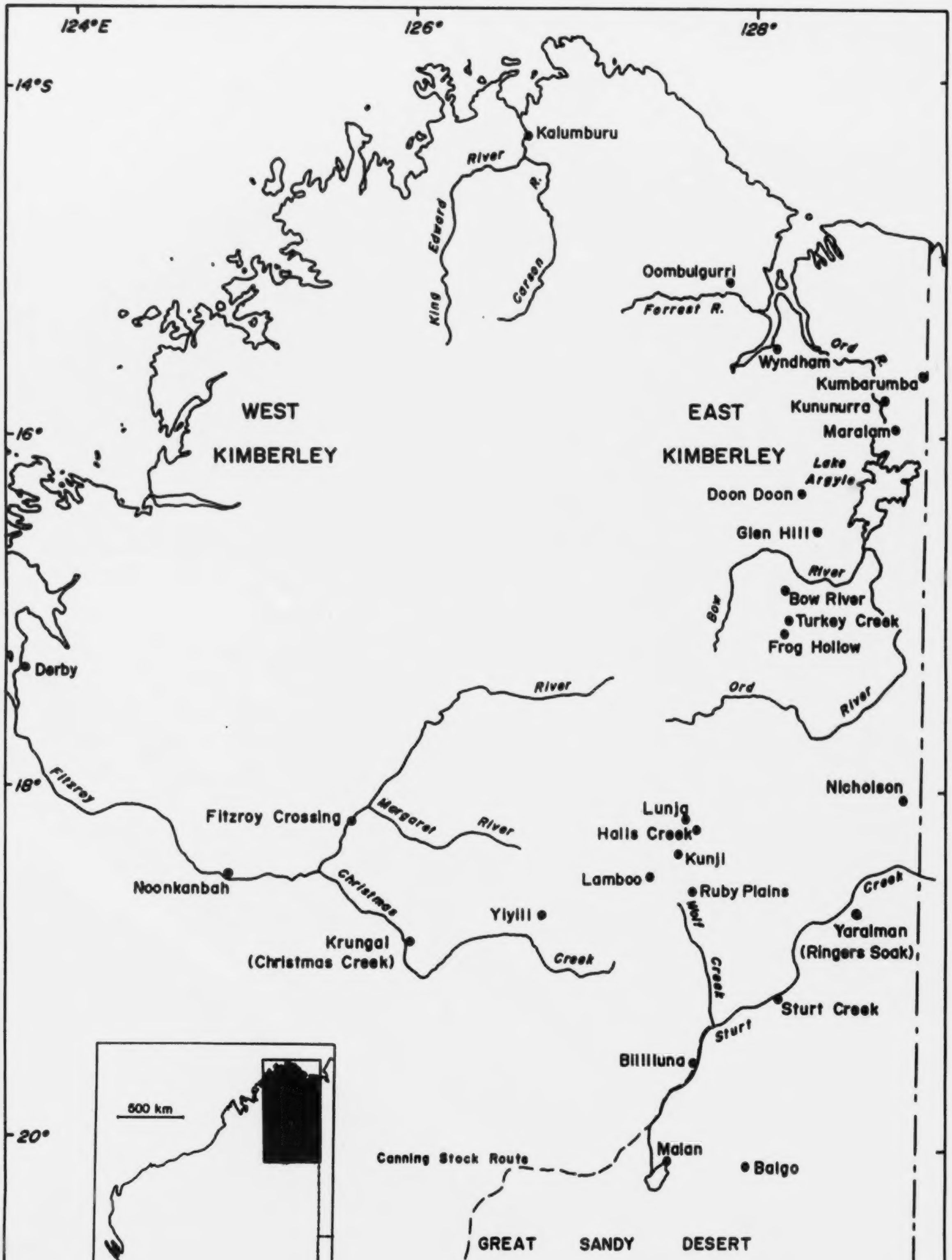
Figure 2: The location of the research enlarged



(b) the National Centre for Research on Rural Education which sponsored the research already was involved in wide-ranging investigations into remote rural education issues more directly pertaining to other Australians in these areas.

These latter surveys will doubtless be to a greater or lesser degree pertinent to all sectors of the rural population. However, the Aboriginal communities which were the focal interest of the research reported here are among the most remote in the State and it is likely that many of the problems and issues which are discussed in this report will be shared only by similar Aboriginal communities in remote localities elsewhere in Australia.

THE LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH

The communities which cooperated in this project are located in a region between $125^{\circ}40'$ and 129° east longitude, and 14° and 21° south latitude. (See map, Figure 2) It approximates the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) electoral district WAG and the Aboriginal Affairs Planning Authority North-Eastern region. Most frequently, the region is refered to as the "East Kimberley". In terms of geographic distance from the administrative centre of the State's education system, Perth, this region is the most remote in Western Australia.

The East Kimberley comprises basically three major physiographic areas within which a variety of environments with associated settlements occur. The areas are:

(a) the northern coastal region from Kalumburu to Wyndham and its hinterland;

(b) the northern riverine region area from Ivanhoe/Kununurra to Turkey Creek in the south; and

(c) the southern desert region taking in communities east to Nicholson, west to Louisa Downs and Christmas Creek and south to Lake Gregory.

Within these regions a network of communities exists. Their inter-relatedness will become evident in this report and have a bearing on the aspirations and needs which emerged.

The northern communities lie on the inaccessible central portion of the Kimberley Plateau. The southernmost desert communities are in the arid eastern part of the Canning Basin and in the Sturt Valley-Lake Gregory area; the north-east of the Great Sandy Desert. Dividing these two areas is the rugged wedge of mountainous riverine country comprising the 65,000 square kilometre Ord River Basin together with the watershed of the Margaret River and Christmas Creek which feed into the Fitzroy River Basin to the west.

The Ord River flows into the sea at the port of Wyndham (population 1,509) on the tidal flats of the Cambridge Gulf, and was dammed in the 1960s to form Lake Argyle, on the edge of which is situated the 21-year old town of Kununurra (present population 2,081), originally the administrative centre for the Ord Irrigation Scheme. Hall's Creek (current population 966) was established as a shanty town in 1885-87 by goldseekers after Hall and Slattery's find of 200 ounces of payable gold in 1885. The town was relocated in 1955 to its present site. Hall's Creek is the most westerly town in the region and is central in the Kimberley region as a whole. Hall's Creek is also the town most central to a number of major traditional communities. It is situated on the Great Northern Highway in the belt of severely folded and faulted country between the Kimberley Plateau and the Great Sandy Desert. Hall's Creek is 313 kilometres by road east of Fitzroy Crossing, over the last stretch of unsealed major highway in Australia, 360 kilometres and 380 kilometres south of Kununurra and Wyndham respectively.

All three towns owe their viability and prosperity in large measure to their functions as service centres for the Aboriginal communities in and out of town.

Rainfall varies from 1,400 mm in the north to 400 mm in the south, and falls mainly as heavy rain in the months from December to March, the Wet Season, with a long dry period from April to November. Northern towns and communities have a high relative humidity during this period (up to 75 per cent), while the settlements of the central and southern area experience an overall lower rainfall and more arid climate. Temperatures are high and can be over 38^{o} for days at a time in the hot months. The dry winter months can be cold, especially at night, and through August and September there are constant dry winds through the central and southern arid part of the region.

Vegetation is varied. Small areas of dense tropical forest occur in gorges where permanent water exists and water-courses (although ceasing to flow and shrinking to isolated permanent and semi-permanent pools during the Dry Season) are fairly densely wooded. Most of the region however is open savannah woodland, trees becoming increasingly sparse and stunted towards the southern arid desert region, with a ground cover of spinifex tussocks and scattered stands of boab or bottle trees. Indigenous plant and animal life has altered drastically since the European invasion and the ecological degradation caused by pastoral activities.

THE PEOPLE

There are five major cultural areas in the Kimberleys, each including a number of different language groups. (Ackerman 1979). Four of these areas or part thereof occur within the East Kimberley region covered in this report.

1. To the west are the Walmadjarri people; throughout the region Walmadjarri is the most widely spoken Aboriginal language (for many a second language).

2. Around Hall's Creek and eastwards to the Northern Territory border is Djaru and Nyining Djaru country. The Djaru are contiguous with the Gurindji people around and east of the border.

3. The Kitja further to the north are now centred on Turkey Creek, while some Kajirrawung from the north east, along with Mirriwung people, are based mainly now in Kununurra. The Mirriwung constitute one of the riverine Ord River Basin groups, some of whom are now totally and finally dispossessed by the flooding of the middle reaches of the Ord River to form Lake Argyle.

4. The northern plateau and coastal or *djalwoda* people of the Wunambul, Kampere and other language groups are represented now in the isolated communities and outstations of the northern area.

As well there are a small number of Djamindjung and Muriny-patha people, part of a cultural bloc from the east around Port Keats in the Northern Territory. In the far south of the region our study included Kukatja, Walpiri and Pintupi people from the desert cultural bloc.

In the early 1960s, the Aboriginal population outnumbered non-Aboriginal colonists and itinerants. Since that time the number of non-Aboriginals has risen steadily until in the last ten year period rapid growth in the region, mainly in tourism, mining and in the government sector, has turned about the proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal inhabitants. Nevertheless the Aboriginal population remains a significant proportion of the total (see Table 1) and constitutes the major proportion of permanent residents of the region.

The Revised Kimberley Profile of the Department of Regional Development and the North West 1985 notes that on current trends Kununurra is one "of the fastest growth centres in this State if not in Australia." As well as large numbers of non-Aboriginal permanent settlers and itinerants, a small number of Aboriginal people from other regions have joined the workforce in the region. The above Profile also notes the overall youthfulness of the general Kimberley population, with 57.0 per cent under the age of 15 years.

TABLE 1: THE POPULATION OF THE EAST KIMBERLEY
(From 1985 Kimberley Profile)

Area	Aboriginal	European	Total
Hall's Creek Shire	1704 (67%)	837 (33%)	2541 (100%)
Wyndham-East Kimberley	1489 (28%)	3770 (72%)	5259 (100%)
TOTAL	3193 (41%)	4607 (59%)	7800 (100%)

This report details the views on education of a sample of these East Kimberley Aboriginal Australians. As well as the views and attitudes they expressed, some priorities and strategies for improvement which they suggested are listed for consideration.

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

In 1982 and 1983 some northern Aboriginal communities withdrew their teenage children from various school hostels and called for secondary education on site in remote communities. Subsequent statements by the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) reaffirmed the need for positive action to provide for education in such communities. (Working Party on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Education First Report April 1984). In discussion with me NAEC and National Aboriginal Conference (NAC) members emphasised the importance of their call for research into problems and needs in Aboriginal education, particularly in remote areas. The research reported here is a response to those Aboriginal calls for dialogue and consultation.

The basic idea of the project was that a wide range of Kimberley communities and individuals would be involved in discussing education issues. The aim was to gauge community attitudes, perceptions and opinions about those issues. In addition we tried to ascertain the order of priority in which these issues are held by Aboriginal people in the region. After having gained some insight into these two matters we sought ideas and suggestions for change. Our proposition was that people who have experienced the problems at first hand are well placed to suggest strategies for improving education in directions they themselves deem to be important and in the interests of their children and their communities. This is then a report of

(i) the viewpoints of East Kimberley Aboriginal people on education;

(ii) their priorities as to what issues Government should be addressing; and

(iii) their suggested strategies for achieving a system of education which meets the perceived needs of the remote Aboriginal community.

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach

The study was conducted in a mode of ongoing participation of Aboriginal people in the region; a method of research-in-dialogue with communities. It involved five interrelated phases. The findings of the first major field trip in the region determined to a large extent the method of conducting the second (see Figure 3). The second field trip sought further information on those factors which had been designated as important by community meetings. In the final phase the information gathered was analysed and the findings were then taken back for consideration by community members for their critical comment.

Initially the intention was to set the parameters of the research at the borders of what is categorised as 'secondary education' as that seemed to be the area of greatest public concern. However, it became evident in preliminary discussions with Aboriginal people in the Kimberley region that their concern with the administratively designated area of secondary education included important concerns at its peripheries. The dearth of appropriate educational services at all levels was evidence that such a categorisation of education is unrealistic in this context. Therefore we broadened our base so that our investigation sought Aboriginal people's opinions as to which issues concerned them most. As it turned out a broad spectrum of educational problems was encountered and these will be discussed in this report.

Stages of the Research Process

It was important that this research should be conducted in dialogue with the people themselves, and so it was organised to take the following form:

1. An exploratory trip to the area by the principal researcher. Through the help of local Aboriginal resource agencies as many as possible initial personal contacts were made. This was followed by the drawing up of a detailed research design. Copies of two alternative proposals were circulated to relevant Aboriginal and government bodies for comment and advice. A steering committee comprising Aboriginal people from the East Kimberley and in the field of education was set up to advise the principal researcher.

2. The employment of an Aboriginal research assistant from the East Kimberley. She worked on the project during the next phase of planning and fieldwork, assisting in the development of detailed strategies for collecting data and participating in the first round of community meetings.

3. The production and circulation of an introductory 'videoletter'. This was sent to Aboriginal communities, informing them of the study and seeking their involvement.

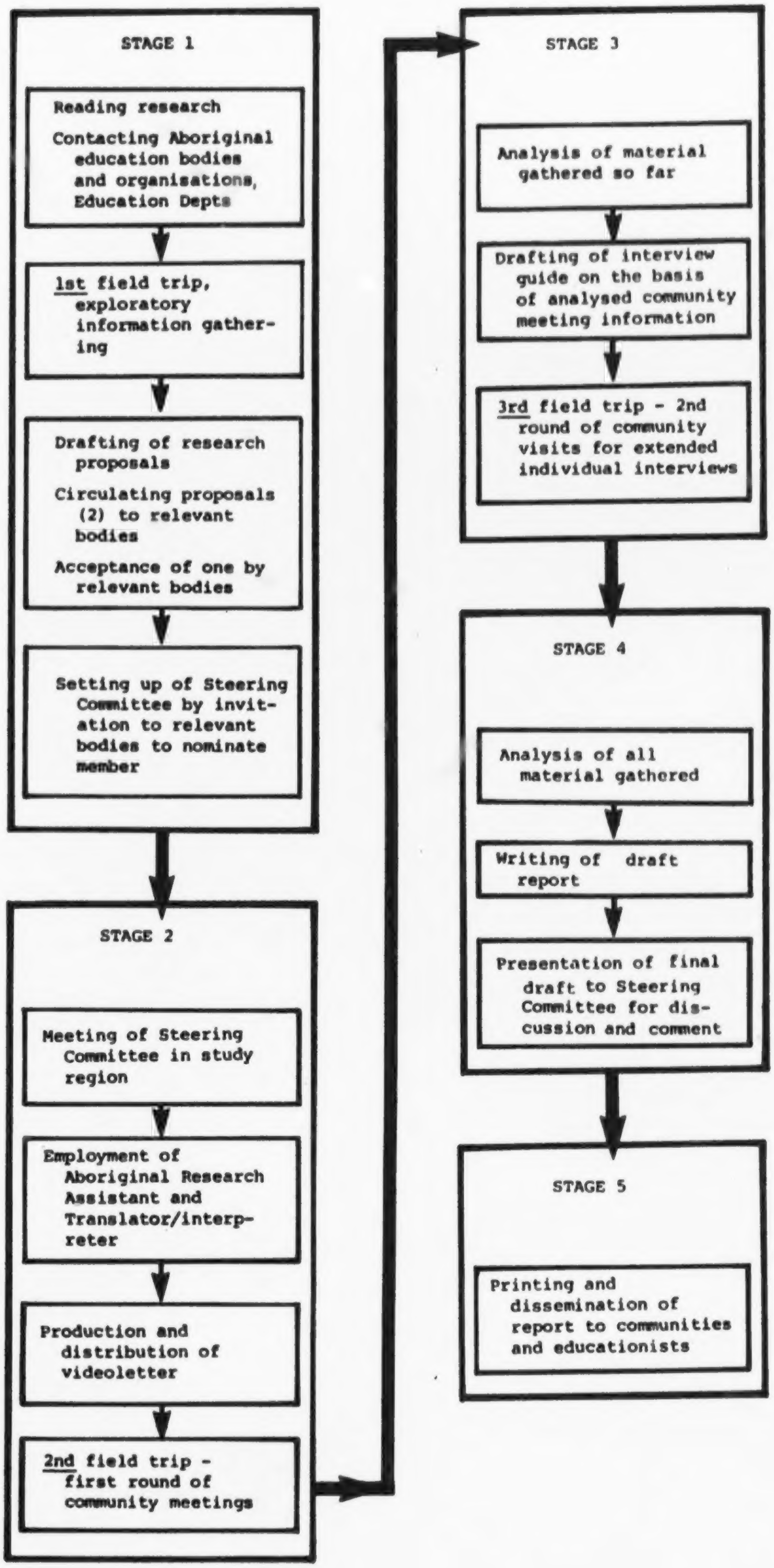
4. The second field trip was the first of two extended visits to a number of locations within the region. The two research workers, travelling to all major towns and settlements in the East Kimberley (see map: Figure 2) as well as many smaller outstations, spoke with community leaders and others and listened at meetings with community groups to discussions of their concerns in education. In this way they were able to contact and have discussions with representatives of 31 different Aboriginal groups.

   The information gathered brought to light major areas of concern. This part of the field investigation took six weeks.

5. The material gathered during this period was reviewed and annotated. From this information a more detailed interview guide was drawn up which explored all the major ideas people offered.

   A third trip was then made to the East Kimberley from May 25, 1985 to July 24, 1985. During this part of the study concerns and ideas which emerged in the first round of visits were explored in individual interviews in fourteen of the original 31 locations - the constraints being time and finance. In each of the fourteen locations persons from three age categories were interviewed - senior people over about 50 years, middle-aged people from about 35 to 50, and young people under 35 years of age. In some locations

Figure 3: Stages of the research process


STAGE 1
Reading research
Contacting Aboriginal education bodies and organisations, Education Depts
1st field trip, exploratory information gathering
Drafting of research proposals
Circulating proposals (2) to relevant bodies
Acceptance of one by relevant bodies
Setting up of Steering Committee by invitation to relevant bodies to nominate member
STAGE 2
Meeting of Steering Committee in study region
Employment of Aboriginal Research Assistant and Translator/interpreter
Production and distribution of videoletter
2nd field trip - first round of community meetings
STAGE 3
Analysis of material gathered so far
Drafting of interview guide on the basis of analysed community meeting information
3rd field trip - 2nd round of community visits for extended individual interviews
STAGE 4
Analysis of all material gathered
Writing of draft report
Presentation of final draft to Steering Committee for discussion and comment
STAGE 5
Printing and dissemination of report to communities and educationists

several people in each of these age categories were interviewed, in others only one. Constraints here again were time and the availability of interviewees.

During this phase of the field research three local Aboriginal people (in each of three broad geographical areas) were formally employed on the project. Many others gave of their time to participate informally with interviews and introductions, suggesting meetings, helping with accommodation, and so on. The persons employed on the project gave ideas, suggested strategies, arranged and assisted with interviews, and interpreted when necessary.

6. During both rounds of community meetings and interviews a large amount of information was collected and tape recorded. Written notes and interview sheets were completed in the field either by or together with interviewees.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Problems of access.

The research was conducted in a remote area some 3,500 kilometres from Perth, the centre of education planning in this State. More important to the structure and design of the research however was the fact that the traditional population of the area is isolated from the mainstream of Australian society not only by geographical separation but also in terms of cultural tradition.

Access to the region was by air and four-wheel-drive vehicle. The most isolated communities visited were Kalumburu and Oombulgurri in the north, and Jalyirr outstation to the south on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert. Kalumburu and Oombulgurri were accessible only by light aircraft at the time of our visits. Because time and money were limited, visits to Kalumburu were restricted to an exploratory trip and the first round field trip. We were unable to organise community meetings in those places, but spoke with chairmen and councillors; our visits were restricted by the return time of the aircraft on which we had come.

Pitfalls in cross-cultural research.

The danger in cross cultural research is that information given by people of one culture may be misunderstood or misperceived by people of another. This research is no exception. To minimise the likelihood of such misunderstanding a principal researcher was chosen whose previous experience included working as a research linguist and living for extended periods over three years in an Aboriginal community in the region. She had a close working knowledge of the area, an established network of communications, an awareness of the multilingual nature of the population and some facility with Kriol.

The design of the research tried to guard against cross-cultural bias in a number of ways.

(a) By notifying Aboriginal organisations of the proposed research from the outset, then asking for their critical comments on the research proposals.

(b) By establishing and maintaining contact through meetings and progress reports with a steering committee of six advisors, five of whom were Aboriginal, four from the Kimberley region.

(c) By employing Aboriginal research staff who:

  (i) worked on the planning and design of the project

  (ii) participated in and monitored fieldwork to ensure that it was conducted in a culturally acceptable manner; and

  (iii) translated and interpreted wherever necessary and possible.

(d) By using a trilingual introductory 'videoletter'.

(e) By relying directly on local Aboriginal organisations and community councils for advice as to when, where and how meetings should best be conducted.

Language

The extensive multilingualism in the region was discussed at the first steering committee meeting in relation to the work of this inquiry. Kimberley members of the steering committee were of the opinion that the value of this research lay in its potential to tap "grass roots" opinions, attitudes and needs of Aboriginal people. Therefore, it was seen as essential to use Aboriginal languages through the involvement of translators/interpreters where necessary.

The region encompasses a number of distinct language groups. A local bilingual or bidialectal Aboriginal field assistant participated in all group meetings and many individual interviews. On several occasions formal interpreting was done by an interpreter/translator On other occasions interpreting was done informally by local people during the course of discussion.

The Aboriginal population of the East Kimberley is characterised by a sophisticated multilingualism in non-literate traditional languages. In contrast the same population suffers a high degree of illiteracy and semi-literacy in English. Hence the steering committee suggested that in the interest of good communication an introduction to communities should be by videotape; a 'videoletter'. This proved to be an excellent idea.

It was agreed among Kimberley members of the committee that Kimberley Creole, a dialect of the recently-evolved Aboriginal language, increasingly referred to in the literature as Kriol, was the most widely spoken and understood language variety in the region. The next most widely spoken language is Walmajarri. By using these two languages as well as English in the videoletter we achieved maximum audience coverage.

It is due to the recognition of the importance of good communication that the research has been conducted in the manner it has. Not only were language and cultural differences taken into account, but they became a focus of this study. It became evident that the Aboriginal people of the East Kimberley are more aware of the importance of these issues in education today than are many educators.

Representativeness and reliability.

Population data available for the study region indicate that the people we sought to contact are distributed over a geographically vast area, and live in a variety of social situations. I describe these different living situations as towns, communities and outstations. Within these situations living standards vary.

In towns the differences are particularly striking. Living conditions vary from windbreaks, tents and shacks through to asbestos State Housing Commission homes and recently built brick and tile homes. It was clear that people living in such vastly differing situations might have different views on education. I therefore divided our town sample into two groups, fringe settlers and town dwellers.

We have endeavoured to ensure our sample is representative in several ways:

- all life situations in the region are represented.

  (a) towns -
    - fringe settlers
    - town dwellers

  (b) communities

  (c) outstations.

- In each location we included each of three age groups; young of 16-35 years, middle-aged of 36-50 years and elderly of 51+ years.

This method of conducting the survey was judged to be the most reliable and valid way of sampling local views. We interviewed as many persons from each age group as time allowed, but in particular sought persons who had experience with 'growing up kids'. We endeavoured to ensure that at least one from each age group in each location was interviewed.

Interviews tended to be with leaders and councillors in communities and outstations (both sexes and all age groups were represented in this category), with mothers, both young and middle aged, those grandmothers/grandfathers acknowledged generally as being experienced with the problems of 'growing up' children. Some were teacher aides. A very wide spectrum of educational backgrounds is represented in our sample.

The project depended heavily on the advice of local research assistants who alerted us to local groups and possibilities of bias in sampling. We also drew on the expertise of local members of our steering committee and the advice of community chairmen and local Aboriginal Committee on Education group members.

Thus we were able to ensure that distinct groups such as outstation groups temporarily in town over the Reiningtaim or Wet Season, groups associated with particular Christian denominations and so on, were all invited to participate. This gave us a clear indication of whether or not there were issues on which there was general agreement, and if so which, whether there were issues on which the population was divided, and the relative importance of various issues in each situation.

The question of feedback.

The criticism is often levelled at social research studies of this nature that those who contribute to them rarely hear of the results. With this in mind, we designed this project so that feedback has been 'built in' throughout the duration of the survey. Beginning with the introductory videoletter the research had the underlying function of 'consciousness raising', and information sharing. The videoletters remained with communities and, we were told, were viewed and discussed many times.

In the initial open-ended discussion groups of the first round field trip a lot of information and ideas generated by the research topic were exchanged among individuals. These ideas were formulated into short statements and circulated back to the communities for further comment in the second round individual interviews. Since we tried to conduct these interviews in culturally appropriate ways, this meant that very often other people as well as the interviewee participated either passively or actively in further discussions while the interview took place. Thus this entire research procedure has been designed as a two way exchange of information; it has been a dialogue - in a sense a "newspaper" method of broadcasting the ongoing process of the research.

PART 2

THE CONTROL OF EDUCATION

"A responsible Government should provide the facility to counteract anything that society has to offer that's degrading Aboriginal society.

I'd like to see more Aboriginal teachers - to teach about Aboriginal people - to Europeans, police aides, hospital workers and things like that. But there are problems...... When you have an Aboriginal person in there you're going to have to work in along with Public Service system's rulings; and so it all depends on how Aboriginal people will be affected with European lifestyle. They just might get swept away with the tide and that's the end of them. That happens to a lot of our Aides, whatever department they work in.......

A proper place should be established where maybe different groups speaking different tongues, different languages can have a seminar for something like about 2 or even 3 months at a time, teaching various parts of the community different things; that is Aboriginal people who want to put themselves there, to be able to learn, or revitalise their minds with Aboriginal culture, that sort of thing.

I think that will - I don't think, I'm sure *- that will revitalise their minds and give them strength to go out into communities and really work out where they fit in, in that community. If you don't know where you are, well you can't help anybody else. It's as simple as that..... That opportunity has got to be there."*

town father

CHAPTER 3: LOSS OF PARENTAL CONTROL OF EDUCATION - THE PAST

Up until the present - disruption of control

After European contact in the 1880s Aboriginal parents of the region lost control over the education of their children. This did not happen immediately, nor did all families experience the impact of the newcomers to the same degree. In the first thirty years, contact between tribal people and the invading pastoralists and goldseekers was limited and frequently violent. The invasion of the East Kimberley region in the nineteenth century by Europeans nevertheless spelled the end of traditional control of education.

Although the western half of the Kimberley experienced confrontation between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals from 1862 onwards as intending settlers migrated from the south-west British outposts, stocking the area with sheep, the East Kimberley was not troubled by intending colonists until the 1870s. In contrast to the west, the East Kimberley was invaded from the south-eastern colonies via Queensland and the Northern Territory. Good cattle country in the Northern Territory was sought, found and occupied by Europeans droving cattle overland from Queensland after 1872. Reports by expeditions to areas farther west from the Territory led to the arrival in 1884-85 of the first non-Aboriginals with intent to settle and claim the grazing lands of the East Kimberley.

By the end of 1885 the vanguard of the ingression onto tribal lands consisted of four enclaves of 'settlers' and their combined herds of 12,000 cattle let loose in tribal territories. Attempts by Europeans to occupy the Forrest River area were aborted early through rebuff by local tribesmen and the unsuitability of the terrain (Gribble 1930:169; Bolton 1953:33).

The continuing trickle of aliens grew to a flood of more than 3,000 during the years 1885 to 1887 after news of the presence of gold in the area reached the southern colonies. In 1886 a port at Wyndham and a supply and communications centre at old Hall's Creek were established to service miners and pastoralists in the area. Although by 1889 the main rush for gold was over and most Europeans had returned to the south, a number remained and both these settlements became permanent townships. During and after the gold rush, smallholders continued to stock East Kimberley tribal lands between Hall's Creek and Wyndham. Resistance was often strong but not strategically organised on a wide front. Tribesmen attacking settlers or hunting the exotic stock which arrived with them were subjected to fierce reprisals. By 1913 the non-Aboriginal population of the region numbered about 200 (Gribble 1930:172).[1] At this time not all Aboriginal groups were warring with the newcomers.

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[1] When the Reverend E R Gribble (1930, p172) arrived in Wyndham in 1913 en route to establish the Forrest River mission (now the community of Oombulgurri) he found that "the town consisted of about fifteen buildings, mostly belonging to the Government. Included was a large hotel .. built on the hottest spot in town ..". There were two more hotels just out of the town. He found "the Gulf with its high rushing tides and muddy crocodile infested waters .. anything but inspiring".

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Some clans began to form associations with the 'stations' set up in their territory. Young men began working as stockmen in exchange for food and clothing for themselves and their families. Europeans were beginning to see the importance of Aborigines as potential employees on the cattle stations.

In 1910-11 two displaced persons camps were established by the Government, one at Moolabulla and the other at Violet Valley some 160 kilometres to the north, in an attempt to gather together Aboriginal people from their surrounding tribal lands where pastoralists' stock was now ranging.[1] Moolabulla and Violet Valley were to offer, at Government expense, a regular supply of basic foodstuffs - tea, sugar, flour and beef - in the hope that people would forsake their hard-won existence on their tribal land and settle at these two stations, ceasing to kill the ranging cattle. Although the establishment of these 'ration stations' was in part a consequence of pressure in the southern centres for more humane attempts to deal with frontier conflicts, the main precept behind the manoeuvre was the same as the previous police and settler reprisals had been. The main purpose was to protect the stock let loose on tribal lands; to prevent cattle being killed by tribal people.

The establishments of Moolabulla, Violet Valley and the Forrest River Mission were significant in East Kimberley history, marking the beginning of the social conditions which set the scene for the development of Kimberley Creole.[2] At about the same time a Catholic mission was endeavouring to make contact with tribes in the Drysdale River area. It had little success. Then in 1913 the previously abandoned Forrest River mission (100,000 acres of land granted by the colonial government in 1898 to the Anglican Church) was re-established by the Reverend E.R. Gribble. Shortly afterwards he began to offer elementary schooling to the children of tribal people at Forrest River Mission. By 1915 there was a 'compound' where inmates lived in separate girls and boys 'dormitories'.[3] "Gribble's relations with the Aborigines were ... strained. Parents who refused to part with their children had their rations stopped", says Biskup (1973, p.129).

Attempts by the Europeans in 1913 and onwards to impart European style education (that is teaching of English, needlework and the Christian religion) to the indigenous people were viewed by many Aborigines with reserve and suspicion. A north-east Kimberley Mirriwung speaker, about 50 years old, member of a recently formed outstation group, recalls:

> "Our granny didn know Gadiya. Imin frait la Gadiya."
> *Our grandmother knew nothing of white people.*
> *She was afraid of white people.*
> T232307

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[1] These establishments, referred to euphemistically in the official literature of the day as 'Aboriginal cattle stations', were known rather more pragmatically in the region as 'ration stations' or 'feeding depots'.

[2] K. Thies, work in progress.

[3] Green, N.W., European Education at Oombulgurri, An Aboriginal Settlement in Western Australia. Master of Education thesis, University of Western Australia, p.113. Unpublished.

Her brother, now approaching 60 years of age, senior spokesperson and chairman of this recently formed outstation group agreed:

> "Fraitin la Gadiya prapli. Dat da wai dei couldn' git wi la skul; dei bin teigum as la bus olataim."
> *Really frightened of white people. That's why they didn't want us to go to school; they always took us out bush.*
>
> T232309

Not all were distrustful. In particular, parents of children who were part European were interested in the possibilities which schooling offered to their children. N.Y., a diminutive grandmother now 71 years old, of Wyndham, was one of the early inmates of the Forrest River Mission. She told me:

> "Forrest River; I went there for schooling, and I was in dormitory."

I asked how many years she had been there, and she replied:

> "I could'n tell you! Too many years! Too many years! [i.e. very many years] .. I can read and write; I went day school and night school. We used to go to school daytime, and nightime we used to go school again. School, and also doing fancy work. Crochery, knitting, weaving, we used to do all that .... The first missionaries we had, jadja Gribble and John Gribble his son and James Noble and Mrs Noble, they came across there. They had a house - but they were a kind people, really good - they had their own family."
>
> T152035

N.Y. was philosophical about the hard times at the Mission, and recounted how it was in those days. N.Y. was the last child of her mother, and daughter of an Afghan teamster.

> "My own mother grew me up and sent me to school; she was a sensible old lady. Although she was a bush lady, but she knew how to speak English.
>
> "Well they took me there, overland - not by no aeroplane, not by no boat; they swim across with me this firs' river, the second river and the third river, in Oombulgurri. They went to Djaja Gribble and said:
>
> "Mai gel ai purrum iya for skul"
> *I would like to leave my girl [daughter] here with you for school.*
>
> T152053

"You know, they used to talk Pidgin English, well I have to say that!"

Interviewer: "Well some people's Mum and Dad used to hide them away .."

N.Y.: "No not me, my mother never hide me, she take me to school. Well my mother knew white people, she used to work for them here. She should know!"

T15250

She recounts an incident in her days at the mission as a young girl:

N.Y.: "Although I was small I used to fight with one father. He was a priest. And he said to me "Why can't you bring that old lady to church?" an I said "I can't lead her, she's sick." An 'e turn aroun and shake me like this and I turn round and caught his ah long .. habit and I sling him round and he fell .. although I was small I used to fight me battle I tell you that!

"They chained me up for fighting with him, in the dormitory; I was only little one but I was fat ...

T152074

"I was schooling, an I run away from school; ... I was fretting for my mum, and one night, everybody was going in dormitory, I went through the hole; I run!"

Interviewer: "What hole?"

N.Y.: "Fence!"

Interviewer: "They had a fence right round?"

N.Y.: "We was in yard; like a horse!..."

T152097

The missionaries attempted to inculcate a new code of behaviour into their charges:

N.Y.: "An if we had boyfriend, we go - the boys come an pick us up, all line up, all in a line, string line, going with our teacher, sit on the stool and talk to your boyfriend. But you caan' go an sleep with them! You'll get big hiding! Big punishment .. and we used to say good night to each other - I never used to kiss my boyfriend!"

T152113

N.Y. knew little, she said, about how it was in the early days before schools, but nevertheless:

> "About man an woman, I'll tell you that part. I think I know a little bit about it. They said to us when we was only kids, you know, growing up; right ... you got a promise husband. Right; you see that man? That's your man. When you grow big girl, you'll marry that man. But if you don't, they'll kill you. That's what they used to tell us. So I married my old man, old B-- H--- he's out there. That's my proper promise husband...
> .... we never used to muck round you know, they used to tell us what is right and wrong; but we never used to chase after them when they was little little boys like that! No, never!"

Interviewer: "But you knew that he was your promise?"

N.Y.: "He was my promise husband and he's still mine. Till him pass away, and I lead [i.e. am the oldest in the family] that's it.

T152259

Thus from early times on, many children have been pulled two ways in the teaching of basic conceptual, moral and cultural issues, caught between the opposing teachings of two vastly different social systems. The Aboriginal tribal law, religious and kinship system required adherence to basic social rules with the ultimate punishment of death for non-conformity. The European Christian teachings diametrically opposed much of the traditional teaching and were enforced by stern and although less final nevertheless immediate and often cruel punishments for not conforming.

Information from dialogues

The second round of individual interviews sought, in addition to their ideas and opinions, brief histories of people's life experiences, with particular reference to education. That led to certain conclusions which are discussed under the following headings:

1. Dislocation and separation.

2. Development of two philosophies for maintaining control of education.

3. A caste system/ambivalence of identity.

1. Dislocation and separation

When the history of the East Kimberley is written it will show the recent background of today's population to be a violent one. The scars remain to this day. Among those with whom we spoke are many who can recount tales, often within living memory, of family members being shot or shot at by European settlers; of battles and spearing of intruders. I recorded stories, for example, told by old people - the mothers, aunts and uncles of today's parents - who were involved, sometimes by force, in the guerilla activities of the historic Pidgeon/Major/Captain bands of young Aboriginal 'outlaws' of the 1890s. Some tribal groups were wiped out in the attacks and reprisals of those days. The last major documented massacre in the East Kimberley was as recent as 1926 at Onmalmeri near Forrest River. Some of my informants were at the Forrest River Mission at the time.

The emphasis in this report is not, however, on disruption of family life through massacres, murder and warfare, or on the ravages of disease - not insignificant, for example through leprosy, common European diseases and more recently the diseases of "underdevelopment" - but on education. Therefore I will limit comment here to the effects of European attempts to bring about cultural change through education.

Almost all East Kimberley families have experienced dislocation and family separation. Personal histories describe how children were taken to mission settlements for schooling without the consent and full understanding of their parents, sometimes directly against the will of their parents. These children are the mothers and fathers, aunts, uncles and grandparents of today's school children.

F.M. talked to me at some length and part of his story states very simply and clearly what life was like in the East Kimberley for Aboriginal people from 1910 to the '50s or '60s.

> "They had a cohabiting law against Aboriginal women and they just took us away from our mothers, our mums. My mother went to Fitzroy police station; we all shifted there with her and from then on we were jis carted away from there ... down to Moore River Native Settlement they called it ... They just sent us, all the boys, down there, and my sisters all went to Moolabulla.
>
> "I don't think they had any option; my father went to court over it."
>
> F.M. 55 years. T462230

This family not only suffered the parents being separated from the children, but the children being separated by sex from each other and placed in institutions thousands of miles apart. Taught to grade 3 level, F.M. returned to his country in his fifteenth year after having worked around the Moore River Settlement until he was no longer the 'responsibility' of the Settlement.

There are stories of similar family breakup all over the region; some people, now grandparents, were taken in the early years to Beagle Bay Mission in the West Kimberley, or an orphanage and school in Broome, and did not return home until they were young adults.

> "I lost my country, and I lost my language ...."

one Hall's Creek grandmother told me. These were the days when, as Biskup (1973: 126) says, "Parents were asked to 'give' their children to the mission until they were sixteen; half-caste children from Broome and other townships were sent to the mission by the Department (of Native Welfare) as a matter of course".

N.H., 61 years recounted:

> At Moolabulla now, outsiders what was roaming round here ina goldfield, they went to settle down now at Moolabulla, and I noticed that alla children that was - belong to white father you know, they took them away.
>
> They said that they couldn't get no teacher to come up there. They sent bigger girls down to Derby then, you know, likes of N--, N--, C--, all those mob they went to Derby; an when most of these girls came back from Derby, well 1940, 41, wartime - I was already married and gone to J.. station, we worked there - some of these girls now what come back with masbi child blangda white person, those da wan what was taken off, I notice. B.G.'s daughter was taken away, N's daughter was taken away and S.B. was taken away too - that wasn' a white man's kid but I don't know for some reason they took those kid off them, sent them down to Beagle Bay.
>
> These what had white father they sent them to that .. convent in Broome. All these darker ones went out to Beagle Bay."
>
> T221290

Participants in the survey told us of family members who had experienced long separations from their immediate family. In some cases close family members were lost and never seen again.

> "At that time, you know ... them was a time when there were no schools here you know. But they came to pick up half-caste boys and half-caste girls in the bush and take them - to Forrest River, or Queensland, or somewhere like that you know. They used to do that ... My stepmother and her brother, since they were taken away from Spring Creek station, out there in the bush country, we have never found them. Their old mother we located, we've got her here with us. But we have never found them; never found all the family."
>
> R.N., elderly woman, central East
> Kimberley community
> Translated from the Kriol. T252177

Many literate East Kimberley parents of today grew up in institutions entirely or almost entirely cut off from their families.

Some people with whom I spoke told of the search for their relations after they were grown up - that is after the State shed its responsibility as guardians and turned youngsters out of the missions at school leaving age. Some found lost relations; for some it was too late. Too many years had gone by and when the jigsaw of dislocated family was put together some recently discovered relative was no longer alive.

N.I., a 43 year old mother, was taken away at the age of one year and brought up in Broome; she met her brother and sister for the first time in 1975.

F.N., a 36 year old mother, described how her grandmother in Queensland was taken away to an island during the war years, when her child was three years old. Her child grew up, married and became F.N.'s mother, believing her own mother to be dead. Only a couple of years ago (1982-3) the family discovered the old lady had been alive all those years.

T71473

2. Development of two philosophies for maintaining control of education

In some cases forward thinking parents or grandparents encouraged children to attend schools in order to become literate and gain some insight into the European mentality. Many people, however, did not give up their children voluntarily to police and welfare authorities who in the first half of this century regularly patrolled the region to 'pick up' children for schooling. Many hid their children when word of the imminent arrival of a government official was received, even 'going bush' for weeks, months or more to be sure of the safety of the child.

> "Pirstaim wi could'n trus wan Gadiya!"
> *Before, no European could be trusted!*
> Nangari, (about 50 years old),
> Mirriwung grandmother T232346

> "Mandjang pipul, mibala. Gabmin bin oldei go - ol Hector Benness i oldei goran la pipul ebriwei la teishin, pikap ola kid ..."
> *Ignorant people we were! A government official, old Hector Benness, used to go all around the stations to all the people, collecting children...*

Turning to her brother, now community chairman on an Aboriginal pastoral property south of Kununurra she said, remembering:

> "Dei bin wanna djen yu tu; but granny bin bait thirru an grab yu intit, burrum insaid la yard. Father bin deya na; kaan ladum; kip raninawei y'know, teigumwei la bus. Our granny bin ranawei got im. Dey bin purrum in yu insaid la hawus eh! - In da keidj y'know, dey bin purrum in ola gel an boi an mai granny bin go in deya insaid an pulimat didjan an i bin ranawei got wi. Wi bin gowat bus na, neba kambek. Wi bin growap bus na, manjang mibala. Dat da wayi wi bin lib mandjang."
> *They wanted to send you too. But granny fought through and grabbed you, didn't she? From inside the yard. Our father was there too. They would'nt let you go - they ran away, taking you out bush. Our granny ran away with*

> *him. They put you inside the house then - inside the wired-in enclosure.*[1] *They put all the girls and boys inside and my granny got right in and dragged this one (her brother) out, and ran away with us. We went far out bush then, and didn't come back. We grew up out there, ignorant, away from white people. That's why we lived in ignorance.*
>
> T232326

For many who did go it meant long separations between family members.[2] Not only were parents separated from children, but brothers and sisters from each other, as usually only light-skinned children from each family were taken. In the case of F.M. above, from a community west of Hall's Creek, even these siblings were not permitted to stay together. The boys (F.M. at six years old) were shipped some 3,000 kilometres to the south, while the girls were taken 200 kilometres east to Moolabulla. F.M. did not see his home again until his fifteenth year when in 1944 he was returned to the Kimberleys.

H.B., in her seventies, from a community near Wyndham, explained, in English and Kriol, how she came to go to school:

> "Me, [and] C-- W--, my brother, wi blangda Turkey Creek that's our own country; home; born deya ... well you know, Government want alla kids to go to school, so we had to go. Olabat Gabmin bin teik melabat wen wibin lil kid, teik us an damp us oba garra boat."
> *My brother C-- W-- and I we belong to Turkey Creek, that's our own country. It's our home; we were born there. Well you know, the Government wanted kids to go to school, so we had to go. Those Government men took us all when we were little children; took us and dumped us there, by boat.*
>
> H.B., 70's, T201029

H.B. was one of the earliest group of children of mixed Aboriginal/ European parentage. She was placed at the Forrest River Mission, contemporary with N.Y. above. During these years many Aboriginal people had little control over education. In the endeavour to maintain some control over their children's fate, two philosophies developed. Many traditional people chose to keep their children with them, often working on stations and sometimes allowing the children to work there too when they were considered old enough. They actively discouraged moves to take their children away to schools.

---

1. Building or 'dormitory' where the children slept was enclosed with a high wire fence, under which the interviewee's grandmother burrowed to get in and rescue her children.

2. In the early days of the missions and up to the 1950s children did not return home for holidays during the year - sometimes some did not see their families even at Christmas.

Others, however, allowed their children to attend mission schools or small schools on stations where the family lived. In many instances the experience of schooling was too traumatic for the children. They did not even begin to understand the processes of schooling or the motivations of 'strict' teachers or missionaries who tried to force them to accept traditions which ran counter to their own (food and eating habits, clothing and clothing conventions, rigid enforcement of alien body rituals - the general regimentation of an organised school and institutionalised living system.)

It was common for children to be punished for speaking their own language. Many children escaped or ran away and managed to avoid being forced to return to school, often with the support of concerned and distrustful mothers and families who sympathised with the children's distress.

Some had a view of the future which led them to keep their children at school. The high hopes of some parents for their children were dashed when they realised that the education did not produce the hoped-for competency in reading and writing English.

N.H., Nyawana, 61 year old grandmother, was brought to Moolabulla at the age of 10 in 1934 by her father. They travelled on horseback from a property some hundreds of miles to the east. She told me:

> "The thing my Dad got wild over - because I wasn't attending school y'know - the teacher used to leave me home to cook their dinner and do washing for them an things like that ... every time we used to go home, he used to trap us: "Go into the storeroom and get plum jam!" We'd go in there hunt around - "Oh which is plum jam!" - bring wrong tin out - "Can't you read?" - that's how he found out I wasn't learning ... he took us back then - "a waste of time; you might as well come back and help your mother."
>
> T221130

Hardships and indignities were suffered by parents and children alike. Many parents, for example, travelled long distances, perhaps out of their own territory, in order to set up home near the institution where their children were housed, only to find that they were not permitted access to them other than to talk through a fence. This state of affairs existed as recently as the late 1950s.

K.G., Nangala, 38 years, a Kija woman, started school in a tiny school on Moolabulla at age seven. She lived in the camp there with her grandparents (her mother was chronically ill and often away in hospital) and she spoke no English when she started school.

> "It might have been a year after that [1955 in fact] or maybe more, we were told by McBeath [overseer] that everyone had to move from Moolabulla. They had to go down to Fitzroy to this Mission. And so they sent some big trucks in from Wyndham and I don't know where, may be from Darwin, and they just made sure

everyone got on the trucks and were taken out of Moolabulla. They were all transported into old Hall's Creek here, Old Town, and they were told if anyone wanted to stay in old Hall's Creek they could stay there, otherwise they'd all have to go to Fitzroy.

"So in the end everyone went to Fitzroy - all the people that were at Moolabulla. I don't know [how many people there were] I just know there were camps all over the place.

"A lot of people say that they come from Moolabulla but they don't really belong there; but they were taken there when it was a settlement, they were taken there and left at Moolabulla, for that short time (from 1910 onwards) and then when Moolabulla was sold as a pastoral lease, they had to be all taken out of there so they sent them down to Fitzroy. The trucks took them down to Fitzroy and they were left in at the old Mission there. They were handed out tents and that to live in ...

"My mother and stepfather took us kids to Nicholson (when he got a job there) a few years later, from living in Fitzroy.[1] When we went out there, Native Welfare sent this man out to pick me up and four or five others. They were left in old Hall's Creek ... and that Native Welfare bloke took me from there to Fitzroy.

"...my grandfather and grandmother had stayed in Fitzroy ... they were happy to see me come back ... but I wasn't allowed to live with them. I had to go into the hostel - old dormitory. There were a lot of girls in one dormitory and a lot of boys in another dormitory."

T361176

"We weren't allowed to speak to our y'know relatives - I wasn't allowed to speak to my grandmother. The mission had set rules on that. If we were caught speaking to our relatives we'd get into trouble. We'd go to bed without any food ... if we were heard speaking our own language we'd be put to bed without any food; so we had to be careful about a lot of things then, you know. We were more or less terrified."

T361242

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1. Nicholson Station is a pastoral property some 500 kilometres east of Fitzroy near the Northern Territory border, in Djaru country.

In general, in spite of the traumatic break from home, the subsequent isolation from family in missions and hostels, and the many unsatisfactory aspects of schooling in earlier years, people told us that mission educated children became literate in English. Many of them absorbed numerous facets of European culture to the extent that their socialisation was as much European as Aboriginal. Their goals and aspirations were influenced by the Judaeo-Christian ethic - if not through the missionaries then by government teachers in the small government run schools, themselves generally steeped in the ethnocentricities of the "Anglo-Saxon work ethic". For some, the price of literacy was high - the loss of family, culture and language.

With the insight promoted by the dialogues of this study, however, I want to emphasise that socialisation for many hostel and mission children was only partly European. I cannot say their socialisation was more European than it was Aboriginal. This has been due to the ever present Aboriginal world of peers inside the institutions, the family outside of them, and to the strength of Aboriginal social organisation maintaining order and continuity through the ties, rights and obligations of the kinship system.

3. A caste system/ambivalance of identity

Through this system a group of people grew up who were socialised through long periods of hostel living, physically isolated from their families, and who acquired varying skills of literacy and numeracy. These are the fair skinned or 'half-caste' Aboriginal Australian parents of today living in East Kimberley towns, some occupying jobs in the region, with western-oriented aspirations for their children; people who would like their children to grow up to a job, able to support their families through work, preferably in the region.

Aboriginal families who gathered and lived round Government settlements and missions from the early years have also gained some degree of mainstream Australian education for their children, while still educating them in traditional matters through informal socialisation among close and classificatory kin and through the process of ceremonial Law. Children have varying degrees of familiarity with traditional language and traditional culture today. Before award wages came in and large numbers of people moved off the stations and into the towns, the Law was practised during 'slack time', the Wet. The wet season - 'Reiningtaim' or 'Halideitaim' - meant Christmas for the Europeans and Law for the Aborigines.

> "When I grew up ... well Christmas time was you holiday; when it's March or April - work time; you don't do anymore of that Law business; you kin do it all in the Wet."
> 40 - 50 year old stockman T121440

> "They useda have Law every Wet time, evry Wet season, but not now; you see Law coming up evry week masbi, every month."
> Middle-aged Christian man,
> town fringe settlement JB11300

After the big walk offs and "put offs" of the '60s large numbers of people moved or were moved to reserves and fringe camps surrounding

Kimberley towns. A system resembling a caste system developed where those with parentage partly other than Aboriginal learned in at least the rudiments of English literacy. In varying degrees many of these people 'lost' their traditional language and grew up with a less than adequate knowledge traditional culture, and without gaining proper respect for and belief in the religious aspects of it.

> "When we were born, we came out of real full-blooded mother. When we grew up and went with the white fella, then go down to their camp to have a yarn and they reckon "Oh yu Gadiya kid! Yu go! Yu not for us any more! Yu finish!"
>
> "You know, we were pushed out like that in my time, when I was a kid. Because your colour's a bit lighter than the full blood see. "You Gadiya kid! You go! Yu kaan eat my beef, this goanna an everything! You kaan eadim! Yu Gadiya now. You go with the Gadiyas! We were pushed out like that when we were kids."
> "You know they wouldn't let us mix up with their Law. We were half way between the whites and the blacks, you know, in the middle. Half-castes in the middle. Full blood on that side and the whites other side and we ina middle ... we were wrong colour."
>
> N.H. stockman, middle aged, central East
> Kimberley Outstation KT121167

These people and their children participated more closely in the life of the Europeans than those who retained their children and kept them out of schools, educating them in the traditional manner.

> "We ate with the stockmen"

one 40 year old informant of mixed parentage told me;

> "We were not fed at the woodheap like the others, and we didn't live down at the camp."
>
> R.H. north Kimberley fringe settlement,
> personal communication, 1985

"Half-caste", in the terminology of the East Kimberley Aboriginal people, by implication has come to mean not simply any person of mixed Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal parentage but such a person, usually literate to some degree, whose life philosophy is mainstream Australian oriented rather than Aboriginal tradition oriented. People whose parentage is mixed but whose philosophy of life is basically tradition-oriented, tend to be regarded as 'Blakbala', that is, Aboriginal.

SUMMARY

This paper cannot hope to explore in depth the history of the East Kimberley, nor is that its intention. Some detail of the history of the region and its effect on the lives of individuals in interaction with the politics of education today, however, is indeed part of the story this report tells.

Working with such a broad spectrum of people, I have been given a degree of understanding of that realm of experience where for East Kimberley people historical events and the life problems of individuals meet.

In regard to education, the data indicate the gradual emergence of two groups of East Kimberley people over the last one hundred years. They are:

(a) those people who have preserved a large measure of integrity as far as their traditional heritage is concerned; and

(b) those people who during the same period have become aligned with Western ideas, attitudes and aspirations, while retaining nevertheless, to a greater or lesser degree, their Aboriginality.

During the course of history strong social pressures from the wider society have been at work to cause and maintain antagonism between these two groups in the East Kimberley. In spite of these pressures, the second group has retained a strong Aboriginal identity. By this I mean maintenance of ties with the Aboriginal community; familiarity with the kinship system and all that it entails; and use of the Aboriginal lingua franca, Kimberley Creole, as well as Standard Australian English.

Group (a) is comprised of those people to whom I will refer as 'tradition-oriented' and who usually are living in communities or outstations.

Group (b) is comprised of those to whom I refer to as 'western or mainstream oriented'; they usually are townspeople.

These categories are useful to describe the scene today. Of course they cannot be absolute. It seems to me that many permanent settlers in town fringe camps and settlements may constitute a third category whose allegiances are less fixed and somewhat ambivalent.

CHAPTER 4: EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

In the towns of the East Kimberley region, Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people share with the non-Aboriginal population a variety of educational problems which are associated with living in a remote rural area. Future research which might include the European population of the region would undoubtedly reveal details of common needs and concerns. However, a number of specific factors over and above these shared concerns militate against remote Aboriginal students gaining an education which would enable them to take their places as contributing adults in the regional community; an education which is satisfactory to their parents, the community as a whole, and themselves. The responses in the present research indicate that many of these additional issues relate to the links of the Aboriginal community with a cultural background which is vastly different from the mainstream Australian tradition, and to the inability of the education system to use and develop to best advantage this bicultural versatility, and the special aptitudes which accompany it.

THE NEED FOR SHARED IDEALS

There are two groups of people involved in education in isolated communities and outstations outlying from the three remote towns in the region. They are:

a) local members of these communities and outstations;

b) outside agents of education; that is, the Education Department with its central administration and its field staff of classroom, itinerant and advisory teachers.

The first group comprises the people who constitute tradition-oriented Aboriginal society, that category of Aboriginal Australians most widely divergent in language and culture from the mainstream society.[1] The second comprises those members of the mainstream society in whose hands lies the control of formal education.

An important consideration underpinning this study is that concepts, perceptions and priorities differ between these two groups. At present, formal education is based on the views of the controlling group, often with little regard for the concepts, perceptions and priorities of the local group. Clearly if the definitions, aims and objectives of education are not shared by parents and educators, then children are in an ambivalent position. For education to be a success, all participants in the process must understand and share its ideals and believe in its long term benefits. What then are the aims and objectives of education for Aboriginal people in the region?

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[1] NAEC definitions - see Appendix 1.

The Children in Between

Aboriginal families in the East Kimberley are experiencing rapid social change. Much of this change has been at least as devastating as it has been advantageous for them. In this region today, children of Aboriginal families grow up against a backdrop of traditional conservatism. They need to be able to cope in a multiracial society dominated by a mainstream cultural bloc alien to the traditional ideals of their own people.

A brief 'word picture' of the social world of two hypothetical East Kimberley children, one from an outstation, one from a town, might help to illustrate this.

Take first an example of a child born into the kin category *Nagarra/Djagarra*[1] of the Djaru people of Boora,[2] a desert outstation, 150 kilometres from an East Kimberley town. Before the child is born, everyone in the 70-80 strong group knows that this baby will belong to the *Nagarra/Djagarra* kin category, because the baby's mother is of the subsection or 'skin' *Nyawana*. When the baby is born every member of the community will have a new relation.

The new baby is *Nagarra*, a girl born in the Reiningtaim at a big town hospital and given a *Gadiyaneim* (European name), Shirley. The new baby is surrounded by a world of people all of whom call her by a kin term, and to all of whom without exception she likewise will relate with a kin term - uncle, auntie, mother, father, cousin, brother or sister and so on. So far, a secure world.

Because times are changing, she will sometimes be called by her *Gadiyaneim*, particularly by her young relations, and especially in town and in front of Gadiya, white people. At home she will be known mostly by the 'bush name' which she has been given, although mostly, as tradition dictates, people do not call her name at all, but address her as above by such terms as 'little sister', 'cousin', 'auntie', and so on, or as *Nagarra*, the name of her kin category or skin name.

This child is part of a truly Aboriginal tradition. She will speak Djaru in her everyday life, and her world as a small child will be peopled entirely by relations, consanguineal, affinal or classificatory. Her family is multilingual, older relations speaking up to five or six tribal languages. Some of the very elderly will have added a smattering of Pidgin to their repertoire of desert languages. Her mother and father will speak one or more traditional languages as well as Kimberley Creole, the East Kimberley dialect of Kriol.

Perhaps half a dozen of the seventy or so Boora community members command Standard Australian English, the High English of the cities, and

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1. May be seen in the text as *'Nagarra* and *Djagarra'* or *'Nakarra* and *Djakarra'* or *'Jakarra'*; orthographies for Aboriginal languages are not standardised. Likewise *'Djaru'* may be seen as *'Jaru'* in some texts.

2. Fictional community.

may occasionally use it in her hearing. The chances are that until and if she goes to school her comprehension of it will be limited to grammatical structures and vocabulary which resemble the Creole (Kriol) spoken fluently by herself and her family. This child is bilingual, but neither of her two languages is English.

Her evenings will be spent round the family hearth and her entertainment will be the djunbas sung and danced and the stories told by her group and others visiting them from the Territory and the desert. Occasionally she will visit other communities where her own language and Kriol are spoken. She may visit communities which for two years now have had access to either television or videos, and she will watch the flickering pictures in the evenings until she falls asleep. Once or twice a year she may sit in the Civic Hall of the nearest town and enjoy a country and western music festival, camping after the show by a campfire in a fringe settlement on the edge of town till her family returns to Boora.

On this trip to town while the family waits for mail or stores, her days will be spent playing with her town relations, conversing in the ubiquitous Kimberley Creole, as the town children's Djaru at best is limited to some receptive competence and a few spoken words and expressions. But more often, at home in the outstation, she will play quietly around the camp with her relations, conversing in Djaru, making excursions with her mothers and aunties to places within walking distance to gather *djurnda,*[1] or *bambiriny,*[2] to dig for *burruk*[3] or *djuwa,*[4] sleeping in the shade when she is tired while the women work on.

If no one is going anywhere and the work of the main meal of the day is over she may take a cursory interest in the card games which will start in the afternoon to fill in time around the camp - and if anyone of her playmates can manage to get hold of a deck of cards, they may play their own game, using Creole and Djaru terminology to describe their moves and their successes and failures.

She may be part of a family which recently has moved camp to an iron house or hut, or her family may be living traditional style in a windbreak or bough shelter *ngura*[5] or under a tent fly. In any case there will be no running water at home. The kitchen is a skilfully managed campfire and nearby improvised shelf out of reach of pets.

On outstation communities such as this one water may be carted from a natural source or from a bore. Here at Boora there are recently-constructed small communal ablution complexes (toilet, shower and washtrough) with water from the bore warmed by a small solar heater on the roof.

On trips to town little Nagarra may learn to use the local supermarket, and get to know a little of that other world of which bigger cousins and sisters and brothers talk when they return on holidays from boarding away for school, or when someone comes back home from a stay in a hospital of the city or big town. She will see (but

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1. A small sweet wild onion (Djaru).
2. Freshwater mussels (Djaru).
3. Sand frogs (Creole).
4. Long thin yams (Djaru).
5. Home, camp (Djaru).

not use) the telephone boxes in town; become familiar with the greedy coin operated games machines outside the local shops; and begin to contact the Gadiya behind the shop counters in her eagerness to try out ice creams and the chicken and chips behind the hot glass windows of the roadhouse fast food bar.

She will see (but never enter) the big tourist buses that roll into town and hear (but rarely speak to) the city strangers who pour out of them and crowd back in again and disappear. She rides on the community truck or 4-wheel drive vehicle however with familiarity and may help to dig it out of bogs with a *guruba*[1] or *gudru.*[2] She can operate a *keset*[3] with adeptness while her grandfather ties his *djewek*[4] with its electric cord - there is no electricity where she lives. She listens with joy to recorded music, whether pop or western, or a *djunba*[5] recorded on a *kliinskinkaset*[6] at a traditional ceremony.

And on Sundays if the family is in town it is quite likely that she will join in the Catholic mass sung by the elders of the tribe in Djaru to the accompaniment of clapping boomerangs and guitar; or maybe hum along with her cousin as best she can to the throb of the Gospel guitars of the Assembly of God preachers in a nearby hall. She is a child of two worlds, the traditional and the western.

The second child is Peter, of the skin Djagarra. He is the son of Shirley's mother's sister, and lives in town. Shirley, little Nagarra, addresses him as *ngadjayi*, or 'little brother', and his mother she addresses as *ngamayi* or 'mummy'. This other mummy of hers has light skin and speaks no traditional language although she can understand a little and often uses traditional words and expressions in the Kimberley Creole of her everyday speech.

Peter has never met his European grandparents who live in a capital city far away, but is very close to his mother's tribal mother who comes to stay from time to time from a distant community. With her he talks Kimberley Creole, just as he does when he plays with his sister Shirley from Boora (whom non-Aboriginal town friends call his cousin). Peter's mother, as she is Shirley's mother's sister, is also of the Nyawana skin, or kin group. And so he calls her 'mum' too. White friends refer to her as his auntie; this must be, he reasons, because they are confused and think she is his father's sister, as it is she whom he calls auntie. He speaks Kimberley Creole with other town relations too as they play at the games machines by the shops. As he rides his bike round the town streets with a Gadiya schoolfriend, the two converse either in Kimberley Creole or the Kimberley English dialect of the town. At home his father insists on 'good English' in the house; Peter produces it when required.

The boy rarely or never visits his sister Shirley out at the desert outstation. Their lives meet in town; at his home, in the shops, the park and perhaps eventually the school. They may play at the homes of relations and at his home. There she will learn about European things like armchairs and tablecloths, toothbrushes and gas stoves and different foods and eating utensils.

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[1] Crowbar

[2] Digging stick

[3] Cassette tape recorder

[4] Swag

[5] Corroboree

[6] Blank tape

They may share weekend outings with parents and relatives, catching fish and goanna and eating bush fruits. They may meet at big cultural gatherings celebrating traditional Aboriginal events or Christian traditional events, where he will become increasingly familiar with expressions in the traditional language, with his Aboriginal heritage and family connections and obligations. He will hear reference to the Law, about which townspeople know little.

For children such as these we found that parents identify and value two distinct facets of education, the traditional and the western, and they find that the existing government system falls short of dealing adequately with both of them.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TODAY

We asked the following questions to elicit from people what they knew about the old times, before the days of schools, and if and how they think things have changed for children growing up today.

Q.8. (a) Do you have any Aboriginal obligations or jobs to do?

(b) Could you tell me a bit about education of kids and young people in the early days, before the days of schools?

(c) How do children growing up today learn about these things?

(d) Could you tell me a little about the proper ways a woman or man must behave today to be a respected Aboriginal person in this community?

We found a high level of awareness both of the past and the present in terms of Aboriginal traditions, cultural patterns and expectations, not only in strongly traditional communities but among townspeople also. Townspeople are not, in general, knowledgeable on matters pertaining to the secret-sacred religious sphere of traditional life, whereas appropriate fringe, community and outstation people are.

Nevertheless evidence from townspeople, as well as community and outstation people, strongly suggests that there is a comprehensive store of local knowledge - a body of information in the region about the region, its people, its plants, animals, ecology, geography, geology, history and traditions which is virtually unknown to the European teaching body. The East Kimberley Aboriginal people have maintained a high degree of integrity as a cultural group.

It is now more than seventy years since the first government moves to relocate the tribal owners at the "feeding stations" of Moolabulla and Violet Valley. The early years of "forcibly offered" education attempted to replace Aboriginal traditions with European ones. Later schooling for Aboriginal children in the region has had a similar objective - the transfer of mainstream aspirations and values to the children. Nevertheless most have retained or regained some store of traditional knowledge, the most important aspect of which is kinship.

Kinship

The most crucial factor keeping the fabric of life intact for Aboriginal Australians in the region has been the classificatory system of kinship. This system of ordering the social world is the basis of East Kimberley Aboriginal society. It is this strong and comprehensive social system which has given to every individual status, rights and obligations within his society, all through those years when Aborigines had little status and few rights or obligations in the wider society.

One's system of kinship is learned in childhood. We were told that those people whose childhood was spent in missions and hostels missed out on a good deal of traditional education. This survey shows that most of them, nevertheless, have not lost all knowledge of the kinship system. Although the daily lives of East Kimberley-born part Aboriginal townspeople are western oriented, kinship ties are integral to the functioning of their lives in the region.

As a simple indicator of cultural difference and Aboriginal cultural awareness, interviewees were asked, along with other details of their life and experience, what their kinship category, or tribal subsection was. This provided the following information.

A total of 76 people were asked their kin category or skin name. Sixty four responded with their skin name, 12 did not know or said they had none. In other words, 84 per cent of those interviewed knew their skin or subsection category; only 16 per cent did not. These figures can be further broken down as shown in Table 2.

Knowledge of kin category was to be expected in traditional families. What was revealing however was that 68 per cent of Aboriginal and part Aboriginal East Kimberley born townspeople also knew their kin category.

Traditional knowledge is strongest in the old, and in traditional communities; but it is certainly not limited to them. There is a strong Aboriginal cultural identity within the region.

TABLE 2: KIN AS INDICATOR OF ABORIGINALITY

Respondents	n Tradition oriented	n Western Oriented Townspeople	N Regional total
Total number respondents	39	37	76
Those knowing own skin (kin category)	39 (100%)	25 (68%)	64 (84%)

Language

Traditional knowledge is not conveyed by the use of Standard Australian English. Growing children learn about traditional matters -

hunting, food gathering, kinship and Law - through their tribal language, through Kriol, or by "mix" - the use of mixed Kriol and tribal languages.

Some traditional respondents saw a necessity for their young people to read and write the traditional language, others saw a necessity for children only to speak their traditional language, but all wanted children to have some knowledge of it to enhance contact with their elders.

Townspeople are aware of many aspects of traditional culture and language. They generally do not speak a traditional language fluently, but often know words and sometimes short phrases. Many townspeople report having 'lost their language' and have a nostalgic wish for their children to learn it so that they can talk to older relations in the language.

Law

> "In the days before contact with white people, they (Aboriginal people) did things their way, the traditional way, you know. No school; they were trained in the Law. The Law was important above all. Learning about their Sacred Sites - that was their education. Well, that's how they brought up children in earlier times. If you were a girl you had to follow the teachings of the women's Sacred Sites. Boys had to follow the teachings about the men's Sacred Sites. That was their school."
>
> (from the Kriol of R.N., Senior Law woman,
> northern community T252325)

The formal education of Aboriginal people takes place in the teaching and ceremonies of the Law. In the East Kimberley a resurgence of the Law is taking place in many of the areas visited.

I found interest, support and pride in the comments of many Aboriginal people regarding some aspects of the Law.

> "A lot of those people long ago were really sensible I tell you, not like this lot who have been to school now. It's true!
>
> "In those days when people had been through The Law, men and women, they could not do wrong things otherwise they died - it was a really strict Law, and they used to really live by it.
>
> "Then came schools; like - you know, school came then, and for a while people went the way of the white man to a certain extent. For a long time the schools were run Gadiya way. A few caught on to what was being taught, became educated like white people, really clever. Then recently we had the idea of making this two-way school.

> "Because the first group of children, our children, can't speak their language, see. They've got our colour, but they don't know their language. People might call out to a child, and the child will not even realise who they are talking to. Until we said: "When we get our school, when the government gives us land, we will give our children a two-way education". Well there you are; they have it [the school] now."
>
> R.N., T252225

R.R., Nangari, provides a home base in town for the children of an outstation group to attend a Catholic school. Until recently she taught traditional language and culture there, and is hoping to collaborate with a teacher aide at the state school to provide similar classes. She places great value on cultural transmission.

> "Pirstaim wi didn wurruk por mani, mi an mai four son; wi bin jis wurruk for seika da kids. Burrum liltaim kids mas no dis kaltja wi bin dalum, is laika tjurt for yu, yu no; i laika tjurt; neva forgidim."
> *Before we were not paid for our work, me and my four sons, we first worked for the sake of the children. [As traditional teachers at the school]. From an early age children must know. This culture, we tell them, it's like your church you know; like the church teachings; you must never forget it.*
>
> T182290

The Law is regarded by some Christian groups with unease, however:

> "Law is bad for young people; we are struggling to learn whiteman rules and schooling ..."
>
> (middle-aged Christian man, JB11078)

> "There's too much Law business; Law is changing now; people are making it hard for themself ... people are trying to get back to it but .. they're not growing up like good tribal people. We just don't know what sort of law they're doing. Old people .. are just not strong enough to hold the young people back into their law. The young got they own law.
>
> young people break out all the time - 'go to hell. I'm a different man now, read and write ..' Young people just don't know what to do.
>
> (part Aboriginal man 60ish, 18550)

Among the young (16-25 years) I found a range of attitudes from support and compliance with the resurgence of the Law to tolerance and a deference to the wishes of the senior people, but without a serious commitment to traditional beliefs, through to intolerance.

It is not uncommon for western-oriented townspeople to attend appropriate ceremonies today and participate in peripheral activities, particularly when a young relation is a key figure in the ceremony.

SURVIVAL OF ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND TRADITION IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

East Kimberley Aboriginal tradition then has survived, not in rare, isolated pockets on the edge of the desert, but throughout the region and throughout a range of social situations. We were given by Aboriginal people a wealth of evidence of their involvement with the Aboriginal way of life, way of thinking. People everywhere, in every situation, have intimate personal ties with the country and the events of the East Kimberley past in ways which shape their daily lives and pattern their existence.

Undoubtedly the culture is adapting and changing (as all cultures do) but traditional thought and cultural beliefs, ways of behaving, expectations, patterns of speech and brand of humour colour the lives of East Kimberley people. Kimberley culture does not have to be learned from the pages of a book by most East Kimberley Aboriginal people - they live it, in a variety of ways and to different degrees as we Gadiyas do our own. A Perth-educated East Kimberley Aboriginal teacher aide told me:

> "In every aspect of Aboriginal life today, it's a matter of when you start accepting European ways and disregard Aboriginal ways .. most of my days now are just made up of European ways ...".
>
> K.M., T171230

This is not to say that East Kimberley people should not or do not want to see Aboriginal culture explored, referred to, explained and elaborated in the schools. Nor do they think that each Aboriginal person knows every detail of it. Quite the reverse. The fact that the culture is alive is indeed the reason why it should form part of the basis of formal education. It is the reason why Aboriginal Australians want to maintain integrity and inculcate pride and confidence in their children. Then the children, we were told, can go forward and learn, to bring modern knowledge to their communities.

East Kimberley people value education; but they value a balanced education. They see an urgent need for such education as would transmit the cultural values which prescribe the code of behaviour they expect of their children and each other, and impart new skills and knowledge to broaden their children's capabilities and equip them to cope in today's world.

> "They should have their own culture taught, but their own culture - I think it should take a teacher and the classroom or whatever kids involved, out to where the kids come from. Say a group of [community] kids on that certain day they're having languages, O.K. - say on a Wednesday - well why don't the teacher make an effort to go out there to the community and

> then their culture can be taught to the kids *and the teachers*[1] ... everything is all being done at the school all the time."
>
> 35 year old town mother

This mother went on to relate about her son:

> "Jimmy had an argument with the teachers over there last week an said "How come we learning about Gadiya thing alla time; what about our own black ways?" ... and Jimmy is as white as you!!!"

While they are prepared - and indeed would prefer - to take responsibility for transmitting cultural values and participate in teaching new knowledge and skills, they feel it is necessary to have the support of the formal education system. Without parents and teachers working together for the good of the children there is a danger, respondents say, that the children will take notice of neither.

Social Change: the Role of the School

The social structure of traditional Aboriginal society today is under severe stress. The mores and patterns of living which are taken for granted by older members of the society are not upheld by the wider society, as the 'wider society' is now an alien one.

> "The kids don't know how to explain all these things, see - I mean a kid can't walk up and say to the teacher "well, my nephew ..." - you know he might have a nephew older than him from his older sister - something like that .. "an my nephew is married to that boy's sister." You know? Something like that? He can't go and explain that, and the teacher wouldn't know that. But the boy and girl know themselves that by Aboriginal law you shouldn't be talking to that child.
>
> "They're made aware of [these things] from when they're very young. [Mothers] will say "Didjan bla yu mali for lilwan!" ("This is your mali's[2] child!") That's the sort of thing now; the kids are made aware of that from when they are small. When they go to school now, they know these things."
>
> K.G. T362633

The people of the East Kimberley are placed in the unenviable position of knowing that their customs and values, their codes of behaviour and traditions of respect and status, those very elements of culture which are the taken-for-granted world of the people, are not shared by those to whom they must entrust their children's education.

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1. My italics. This is one way in which many people suggested Aboriginal cultural information can be transmitted to teachers.

2. Mali is a relationship term indicating mother-in-law/son-in-law avoidance.

Not only are these values and customs not shared by the dominant group, they are largely unknown by them. At best they are dimly understood but they certainly are not encouraged or enhanced by the school.

Respondents continually emphasised the need for Gadiya educationists to take note of the following statement made at group meetings and verified in individual interviews:

> Aboriginal people everywhere would like to know about their own culture and history and about the Aboriginal way of life. Parents and teachers should work together in growing up kids.

There must be a response tc this if education is to improve.

Rejection of European schooling

Outright rejection of European schooling is one end product of the neglect of the Aboriginal culture in schools. It seems to have been prevalent amongst traditional people in earlier years. Such attitudes are changing but I found evidence that traditional parents still reject schooling for their child if they feel that the child or his home background and culture are rejected by the school. Active rejection of schooling by parents is one cause of children's non attendance. It may be a major reason among families who have been affected by prejudice or socially stigmatised because of ill health or poor living conditions.

It needs to be emphasized that the strength of kinship ties and associated social obligations have been instrumental in maintaining a strong Aboriginal identity. This is so even among those light skinned or part Aboriginal people who in earlier days were encouraged by schools and missions to devalue their heritage and who today tend to value western schooling and aspire to mainstream ideals. Many traditional parents have taken another view. Having observed or experienced the emotional and psychological havoc wrought by the splitting of families according to skin colour, the loss to the group of family members socialised into another culture, and the misery of many children placed in this ambivalent situation, they have opted to allow their children the choice of going to school or not.

If a child is unhappy, uneasy, or not coping at school - and many are in this category - then, I was told, many such parents do not insist on regular school attendance. Continuity of schooling may thus be lost and the child's progress in the learning of basic mainstream skills is reduced. Forgoing formal education is a cost borne by some families to avoid loss of pride and self confidence in their children. In taking this line of action they strengthen family ties and feel that they strengthen family control and traditional socialisation for their children.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS WESTERN - THE QUESTION OF CURRICULUM

From broad based discussion people brought to the fore a view of education as ideally incorporating both traditional matters and modern day information and skills. We were told by western-oriented as well as tradition-oriented respondents that children need to know about their heritage, culture, traditions and language. In addition, people told us children need to be able to read and write, and to broaden their knowledge of the outside world. That is, they need both a knowledge of the traditional world and competency in the primary literacy and numeracy skills of the wider community in order to proceed to mainstream secondary education.

Views were canvassed on the issue of Aboriginal traditional education and whether or not this should be included in the formal school curriculum (Q.16 a, b, c and d). The response from all areas was overwhelmingly in favour of the inclusion of some Aboriginal traditional education in both primary and high school. Opinions can be broadly represented as follows:

TABLE 3: VIEWS OF CURRICULUM NEEDS

LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS	CURRICULUM NEEDS		SUGGESTED TEACHING STRUCTURE	
	Traditional	Western	Traditional Aboriginal Curriculum	Mainstream Australian Curriculum
Traditional communities	Yes	Yes	We will do this, and teach the teachers	Gadiyas should do this with teaching assistants (aides).
Towns	Yes	Yes	Traditional teachers should do this; little but regular.	Gadiyas, Aboriginal teachers and teacher aides should do this We need training.

Western Curriculum

The need for more Aboriginal people to gain more competence in mainstream skills was noted by respondents in all communities. Townspeople want to see young adults taking their place in the hospitals, schools and offices of the region - generally taking part in the economic life of the community. They want better education opportunities to enable them to do so.

Traditional Curriculum

The details of a traditional curriculum would necessarily differ from town to outlying community - indeed from location to location. However an overall picture of what should be included is clear. In general, a traditional education scheme should include:

- local traditional geographical and historical information;
- traditional ecological knowledge, both botanical and zoological;
- some lessons about the technical skills of hunting, gathering and traditional food preparation;

- some teaching about local language(s).

Such a programme, some respondents suggested, could occupy a small but significant part of the total social studies syllabus. It should be 'little, but regular' commented one eighteen-year old town respondent.

In more tradition-oriented groups the need for teaching the local language was emphasised, as well as a desire to see some elements of traditional knowledge, as above, in the school curriculum. Respondents in outlying communities added a word of caution; giving recognition and a place to traditional education in schools should not be at the expense of giving students an adequate grounding in mainstream skills, especially English.

These issues are dealt with more fully in Parts 3 and 4 of this report.

The Perceived Function of the School

It was made clear to us throughout this survey, that Aboriginal East Kimberley people are acutely aware of the need for children to acquire the same competencies as other children in the mainstream of Australian society. Townspeople whose aspirations are generally western-oriented seek a broad range of improvements to East Kimberley education. Most tradition-oriented people are also well aware of the changed educational needs of their children.

People we spoke with saw the main function of schools as teaching Gadiya things, Gadiya way. They said this is because schools are Gadiya institutions (and so are controlled by Gadiya who, of course, teach Gadiya things, in Gadiya ways). Quite so. People need to read and write, they told us, in order to deal with the wider society. People want their children to learn 'Gadiya way' so that they can have greater control over their lives and can assist their elders to understand and negotiate with the outside world.

However, people felt that the effects of Gadiya schooling on the young of the East Kimberley have not been all positive. They believe one important way in which schooling could be made more effective is by developing better communication and understanding between parents and teachers. They feel that many teachers do not know about the way of life of the people of the region, and that while some may be interested to learn, many are not.[1]

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1. Such comments as these bear out observations made in an East Kimberley town in the course of previous research, where school custom forbade 'after hours' socialising of teachers with Aboriginal people. As parent participation was discouraged at the school, traditional people rarely - almost never - went there, so contact between parents and teachers was virtually nil. On speaking informally with school teachers, I discovered that many had never seen where the traditional pupils in their classes lived, or met their parents, even though some had lived in the town for over a year. I arranged for a group of them to meet a group of parents informally. The pleasure of parents and children was moving. The teachers were surprised at the friendliness of the parents, and the poverty of their situation.

Traditional communities clearly articulated their concerns and priorities. Many townspeople with whom we spoke also brought to our notice the differences in needs and the particular difficulties facing traditional groups. They expressed a generally supportive attitude towards the needs of traditional people, as well as elaborating on their perceptions of the needs of their own children. Although town concerns differed from community concerns in some respects and overlapped in others, both ascribed major importance to mainstream educational opportunities for their children being as comprehensive as possible.

Both traditional and town groups said that young children should be given, in the primary years, a firm basis for their high school years; that is, they should have a good grounding in their heritage, local history and culture, as well as a good grounding in reading and writing.

The Place of Traditional Education in Schools: an obligation unfulfilled

Education of the young about traditional and cultural matters is intrinsic to the maintenance of cultural identity in any society. It is indeed recognised by educationists as the most important function of any system of education.

> 'The major purpose of education is the transmission of culture from one generation to the next.'
>
> (Dettman Report, 1969: 54)

The above statement was made by Dettman in reference to education, culture and change in the mainstream education system. He goes on to note that while on the one hand culture transmission as part of the education process is essential in passing on the consensus of values on which social control rests, on the other hand students must be equipped for making decisions concerning the future of society. The development of the necessary ability to make critical value judgements, he suggests, comes through learning about one's 'own and other societies'.

Local culture and tradition and their place in education, like language, were brought into discussion by groups and individuals constantly in both first and second round visits.

In the bicultural context of the East Kimberley it was made clear to us that it is at this point in education planning that basic and crucial attitudinal and directional changes need to be made. That is in planning courses for children to learn about their own and other societies.

In the Aboriginal society of the East Kimberley region, traditional and cultural information have been passed on to the present day. We were told that this has been achieved however not with the assistance of schools, but rather despite their activities. People in the 30+ age group recall as children being punished by strap (D.M., 35 year old mother) or detained with no evening meal (K.G., 38 year old mother) if they were heard to speak their mother tongue in the grounds of the school, hostel or mission.

One must assume such measures were resorted to previously by educators with the best of intentions. Pushing aside any but negative acknowledgement of the culture of the children who filled the schools, missions and hostels of the Kimberley region was perhaps indicative of a zealous effort to equip the young to fit into the culture of the broader society. The fact remains, however, that such actions and attitudes took no account of the psychological and emotional needs of the child, and were a betrayal of trust to parents who were different in tradition, upbringing and expectations from the Europeans who took control of their children. We were told that schools, missions and welfare authorities isolated children from their parents, and actively endeavoured to alienate them emotionally and psychologically not only from their own background and culture but from their own parents, brothers and sisters.

> "With my own experience, I did lose contact [with my family] because I was always kept in a hostel; and to this day now I've found that sort of separated me and my family really."
>
> 016

Interviewer: "Your family decided you should go to the hostel?"

> "Yeah; but our families didn't have a say really; native welfare days y'know. You're living there at the camp, you're half-caste - you have to go to school. You have to go to school, so you stay in the hostel. An' as I was getting older they'd say to me "You have to stay in the hostel for the Christmas holidays!" That would really break me up. My full-blood brothers and sisters were in the hostel with me, but they had more outgoings back to my parents. Oh I used to go back, but they'd pull me aside on Christmas time, you know, Christmas holidays, and say to me "What about you want to stay in the hostel? Stay with Mr and Mrs so and so? You know you'll have one room to yourself and you'll do nanny goat milking." You know? An I used to love nanny goat milking. If they would have said to me "Go back down to your mum and dad, and you can come back to the hostel every morning to do nanny goat milking" ... if they said "You've got a choice of either staying in the hostel, but if you go back to your mother and father you can still come back and do nanny goat milking", I would have stayed with my mum and dad ... They told me all these nice things, and in the back of my mind, that sort of separated me from my mother a lot. Thinking back now that did break me up".
>
> T342016

Devising an active and positive programme of education for students, whose 'own society' (albeit acknowledged to be part of the wider Australian society) differs fundamentally from that of most of their teachers, requires input and cooperative planning from representatives of both societies; that is the Aboriginal and the mainstream.

SUMMARY - EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

Education, formal and informal, is a process of socialisation; a process whereby the growing individual learns the life skills needed for survival in his society. To be accepted by self and others as a full and competent person a young man or woman growing up in a remote community today must be able to look both ways - towards the traditional life and towards the wider Australian community and the outside world.

Young people need, as the communities put it, to be able to think and speak two ways; facing two cultures they need a degree of competence in each; they need a 'two-way' education.

CHAPTER 5: PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOLS - THE PRESENT

The vast majority of Aboriginal parents who participated in this survey are aware of a basic tenet of educational philosophy, that education should prepare an individual for survival in society: it should prepare one not only for adequate, but for competent and confident management of one's life and the lives of those for whom one is responsible.

Traditional Aboriginal cultural knowledge today, that is knowledge of the basic premises of the social order of Aboriginal life, is gained, as in all cultures of course, by the young child first through interaction with mother and close kin, and eventually others in the social environment - peers and other adults significant to the child outside the immediately circle. In the schools, however, the traditional cultural values generally are overlooked altogether.

Education should continue, expand and enhance those cultural and social experiences which the child brings to school. A large measure of Aboriginal unease about Western education is due to the realisation that the existing system is not achieving that aim.

Participation in the schools by Aboriginal children in the region today is greater than it ever has been since the days of early European contact. Still there is a desire for more community authority and more effective participation by parents. We found in every sector of the Aboriginal community interest in becoming involved in decision making about education. All but one group contacted in the first round of discussions contributed their ideas about the importance of various aspects of education.[1] Their comments covered areas of primary education through secondary education to the educational needs of people who have finished school, whatever their age. The following section is a description of participation and control in the region today in terms of formal involvement and informal controls.

FORMAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOLING PROCESS

Control over education implies awareness and understanding of options and involvement in choosing among them. Formal involvement is discussed under the following headings:

The schools.
The school councils, parent organisation.
Government schools - a need for particiption.
Other parent bodies - Aboriginal committees on education.
Discussion - difficulties in participation.

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[1] See pp. 53, 54.

The Schools

Schools in the region cater for a varied student population as shown in Table 4. Those in outlying communities cater for a totally Aboriginal population, while town schools serve a mixed Aboriginal/ non-Aboriginal student body. Clearly there are diverse educational needs which require an informed and flexible approach to teaching and learning.

TABLE 4: ABORIGINAL SCHOOL POPULATION IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY
July 1985

	Pre Primary Total	Primary Total	Secondary Total	Grand Total	Aboriginal students as % of total school population.
Balgo	?	110	33	143	99%
Billiluna	-	28	-	39	100%
Glen Hill	5	14	-	19	100%
Hall's Creek	?	240	55	295	89%
Kalumburu	-	41	2*	43	100%
Kununurra DHS	6	123	34	157	28%
Kununurra C	10	50	-	60	100%
Lake Gregory	12	28	-	40	100%
Oombulgurri	16	36	-	52	100%
Turkey Creek	21	59	-	80	100%
Wyndham DHS	9	67	36	112	35%
Wyndham C	11	74	-	85	100%
Christmas Creek	?	54		34	100%
Yiyili	8	19	3	30	100%

C = Catholic DHS = District High School

* Kalumburu Government Secondary school has opened with 28 students in 1986.

School Councils, Parent Organisations

Participation in school councils is highest in those traditional communities where school authorities and school personnel have regard for the local culture and life style. Separate school councils exist (that is, additional to Community Councils) in the larger Aboriginal communities, and in one small community of 60-70 persons.

The school councils operating in the study area fall into two categories, Catholic school councils and independent community school boards. Parents we spoke to where either of these operated felt that school councils were productive.

Catholic School councils.

In both Wyndham and Kununurra there are Catholic schools, both catering for 100 per cent Aboriginal students. Both schools have school councils.

In Wyndham the school council consists of an accountant, a church representative, and one teacher (non-Aboriginal), three parent representatives and one teacher's aide (Aboriginal).

In Kununurra the Catholic school has a school council but we have little information about its functioning.

Independent Community School Boards

Two independent community schools are included in the area covered by this survey, the Yiyili Primary School, and Jitapurru School, the Wangkajungka Secondary Independant School. Both have school councils.

Yiyili community established its independent Community School in 1982. The school board was elected at the end of that year[1] and now consists of the (non-Aboriginal) schoolteacher and community members who constitute the other school staff. The school board did not function during the first two years of the school's operation. However during the next two years the present composition of the board was arrived at and various difficulties regarding the management of school resources were worked through. People of the community are involved directly in the running of the school and in the education of their children.

Wangkajungka community established the first independent community secondary school at the beginning of 1984. From the beginning it had a school council. Now in its second year, the school and council have been faced with problems of discipline, staffing and curriculum. The school suffers from lack of resources, clerical and administrative assistance and the general problems of distance and lack of a supporting infrastructure. Difficulties in access to information and resources is a fundamental handicap in schools such as this - Wangkajungka community's Jitapurru school is perhaps fortunate in being close to a government primary school which, at the time of this study, endeavoured to work in harmony with the Jitapurru school teacher.

A range of advice is difficult to procure. Therefore independent community schools tend to be heavily dependent on the immediate advice and help available through community advisors. The recent appointment of a Co-ordinator of Independent Schools in the West Kimberley (inclusive of Jitapurru and Yiyili) should alleviate some problems there, but will not assist independent schools in the Eastern region.

There is a parent group at the government primary school which serves Wangkajungka community. However, parents interviewed felt that the function of this body was quite different from the Community school board. We were told that the parents' main function is to attend meetings when required by the principal and receive information from him/her. There was a general consensus in this community that there should be more parent involvement in the primary school, and that participation must continue at the secondary level, particularly in the area of tradition and language teaching.

The school council, or school board, is a potentially productive and powerful body for negotiation and consultation between parents and

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[1] The details of the establishment and functioning of that school board can be found in 'Yiyili', R. Dickinson and the Yiyili Community. 1985.

Table 5 gives an indication of present levels of formal involvement of parents in the region in the schools listed. Four levels of participation are used.

TABLE 5: FORMAL PARTICIPATION IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY FROM PERCEPTIONS OF INTERVIEWEES

LOCALITY	SCHOOL	PARENT BODY	LEVEL OF ABORIGINAL PARTICIPATION	COMMENTS
Kalumburu	State	School Council	3	recently formed, April, 1984
Oombulgurri	State	?	?	?
Wyndham	State	?	-	
	Catholic	School Board	2	comprised of 3 parents, 1 cleric, 1 teacher aide, accountant
Kununurra	State	P & C	-	negligible Aboriginal input
	Catholic	Parent Group	4?	
	-	ACOE	3?	recently formed 1984
Hall's Creek	State	P & C	-	participation is said not to have been seen to be profitable by school
	-	ACOE	?	forming late 1985
Ringer's Soak	Catholic	-		participation through community council - new school
Yiyili	Independent Community	School Board	1	got school going and manage it
Balgo	Catholic	School Council	3	recently formed on Catholic takeover
Billiluna	Catholic	-	-	participation to some extent through community council
Malan	Catholic	School Council	little	teacher aides think should be more community participation
Krungal	State	Nom. P & C	low 4	
(Christmas Creek)	Independent Community	School Board	1	community started secondary school 1984

LEVEL ONE	Operation of the School Council - which has overall direction of the school.
LEVEL TWO	Participation in various committees which help form school policy curriculum and finance.
LEVEL THREE	Being included in developing specific aspects of the curriculum. Making resources available - both persons and materials through contact, and reports to parents.
LEVEL FOUR	Canteen work - schools activities - sports days - carnivals - excursions - open days - parent teacher nights - P and C meetings - fund raising and working bees.
NOTE:	These four levels of parent involvement in Schools' Councils were derived from a discussion paper prepared by the New South Wales Department of Education (unpublished, undated)

school staff. In one or two communities it is more than this, and has become an instrument which fosters broad community proprietorship, pride and involvement.

The establishment of small community schools has been an enormous step forward. However, limited management, administrative and clerical skills available in communities, together with limited previous school experience of parents pose difficulties. Problems of distance and communication problems add to those difficulties. Nevertheless, some communities are attempting to surmount them.

Under these circumstances a heavier than usual burden is thrown upon the teacher who often is required not only to teach but also to assist the community council in the day to day management, administration and clerical business of the school. Many, if not most, students in these schools have missed a great deal of schooling and are in need of extra individual teaching. Most speak English as a second language.

Communities which opt for independent community schools are in urgent need of an infrastructure to support teaching staff and the school councils. Access to information and resources is a severe problem.

Government Schools - a need for participation

The option of participation through school boards or councils is, in general, not available to parents of children attending government schools. There is felt to be an urgent need for their participation. One of the needs most frequently stated in our dialogues with East Kimberley people was for better communication and more understanding between the local people and the school staff.

Kalumburu[1] is one exception where there is a school council for the Government primary school. A recent submission by this council to the Education Department for a secondary school has been approved, and the council has agreed that the Government may rent land from the community for a two-way school, hopefully to commence in 1986. At this school elders have begun to teach children about traditional matters.

Parents and Citizens Associations of town schools have little or no Aboriginal participation. Government schools are seen to be not interested in consulting with or involving Aboriginal people, particularly traditional Aboriginal people. A recent incident which caused some resentment was described by an educated part-Aboriginal government employee in town. The school sought to strengthen a funding application by indicating evidence of community wishes:

> "They wanted me to sign this form from the school - they just picked out me and B-- and C--; that forms the community!?? But I don't think they went to -- or down to -- or -- [naming a town fringe camp, a town community and a town housing estate]. They the main people! I mean if they're looking at Aboriginal ways, or teaching ...

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[1] Glen Hill may be another

> "I mean our kids [the town part Aboriginal people] will go along, just sail along with the white man's ways, with white people. We'd agree! They might say to us "Look, we're going to have our high school made as a high school next year - we'd all agree! We'd say that's great, we want our kids to go to high school; we want them to stay with us in the town because they get homesick going away; we'd all say that, yes! yes! But what about the full-blood Aboriginal people? I don't think they even understand what secondary, high school, is, to be honest."
>
> R.C., 35 years, EK town
> T341537

A grandfather, leader and spokesman of a group of permanent settlers in a town fringe settlement, explained his group's choice of the town convent primary school in the following terms:

> "[La convent] wi treinum por denj en ol dat, blakbalawei; teitkul i gat nothing - nobadi larnim -. Convent rait; i rait; wi treining ola kid, denjing. Yu go Potkit - dei go to skul, apnuntaim dei kambek, dei treinum ola yangboi, yangel. Ola denja, ol jinginnan treinum.
>
> "Yu no, we purrum im por denj, wen we gat our Law, yu no, midjelp, we teigum la bus; no woman djii, nadjing; gel go dipranwei .. halideitaim, wen dei finis skul."
> *[At the convent] we train them in Aboriginal traditional dancing. At the State school there is nothing - nobody teaches them. The convent is satisfactory, it's alright; we are training all the children in [traditional] dance here.*
>
> *Go to Port Keats; [there you'll see] they go to school; and when they return in the afternoon, they train all the young boys and girls; the Dancers and the Singing Men train them.*
>
> *They have to dance you know, when they go through the Law, our own Law away out in the bush where no woman may see; girls go a different way [for Law ceremonies]. This happens at Christmas when school is over.*
>
> Djanama; R.O. T61034

In answering question 17 (g) relating to options and preferences for schooling for teenagers one speaker named Nulungu College in Broome, and a college in Darwin as alternatives. He showed surprise when I asked if he considered the local town high school. He had never considered it, he said, because the school had never approached him about it. "They never asked me," he explained. Such comments bear out statements that communication is poor between Government schools and traditional people in the region.

One town respondent commented that traditional parents, even now, tend to stay well clear of the Government school. Before the current staff, said this respondent, teachers used to watch the school fence at recess 'like a hawk'; parents felt deterred from speaking to their children at the fence or passing them snacks or cool drinks. T352300

Ideas as to how much participation is ideal or desired varied considerably from respondents in communities and outstations who would like to set up independent schools, through to towns-people who would like to participate in the general Parents and Citizens Association but who for largely social reasons (of prejudice and social distance) do not. The most important function of a school board, one respondent from a three hundred member Aboriginal community said, was to get the children to school, and encourage parents to do so. Other communities gave similar answers, some felt the school board can become much more involved.

At Turkey Creek, for example, we were told by interviewees that school board members do participate in making decisions about language and traditional matters, and the day to day running of the school. In fact, school board members are involved in teaching at the school. Such involvement implies decision making about curriculum.

Other parent bodies - Aboriginal Committees on Education.

Aboriginal Committees on Education (ACOE) groups have formed, or are forming, in two of the three major towns in the region. The importance of ACOE groups in providing a forum for Western Australian Aborigines to put their ideas to governments through the Aboriginal Consultative Group should not be underestimated. But the Western Australian Aboriginal Consultative Group advising the Minister must have real power to be useful to ACOEs.

It is important to realise that:

(a) tradition-oriented groups have, as yet, little or no representation on these committees in the East Kimberley or on the main consultative body; and

(b) their needs are by no means always identical to those of townspeople, and in many ways they are quite different.

Discussion - Difficulties in participation, town and traditional

Although we found considerable interest in and ideas for the improvement of education, Aboriginal parents in the larger East Kimberley towns were of the opinion that there was little parental participation in the local Government School affairs. Some parents did not know whether or not there was a school board or parent committee at the school their child attended. This might be expected in a large urban area, but not in a small rural community.

There are many instances of active discouragement of local Aboriginal participation in control and decision making in the East Kimberley, and these are often of a subtle nature. Two incidents come to mind to illustrate this point.

The first occurred during the first round of community group discussions conducted in the course of this study.[1] In a small East Kimberley settlement where a group meeting for this inquiry was in progress, a European manager of the settlement had chosen to join the group. After we had run the introductory video letter for the benefit of people present who had not seen it, and were about to break into discussion groups, the non-Aboriginal manager got up and announced to us, before any other person had time to make comment, that these were very shy people, that they did not usually talk to strangers, and that it would be better if we left it at that and came back some other time. With that, the manager stood and gathered up blanket and chair, clearly indicating that the meeting was over. Those present, residents in the settlement, evidently saw no other course of action open to them than to consider it so. This was the only group meeting from which no group discussion ensued.

We experienced other instances of the maintenance of overbearing and patronising attitudes among non-Aboriginals in the East Kimberley during our fieldwork. Free speech and free flow of ideas are not encouraged under these conditions; however this type of domination is not uncommon.

Another earlier instance of the difficulties which can be encountered in community participation occurred in an East Kimberley community where a meeting had been called to discuss community problems, one of which was truancy. A member of a Government service office was asked by the community chairman at this meeting to write a letter to the school principal on behalf of the community. The chairman then dictated the letter in which the community asked of the school principal that the school's bus be used to transport their children the distance of about three kilometres in to school in town each day. The principal declined.[2]

After some years of trying there is still no bus and no communication or cooperation between this community and the school. This community has now given up trying to carry on a dialogue with the Government school. After an earlier equally ill-fated attempt to discuss the possibility of traditional teachers teaching about Aboriginal traditions and language this community is negotiating with a church group for a school.[3]

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1. Reported as an observation of principal research officer; not interviewees' responses.

2. In fact this principal later stated to me that he considered offering one's writing skills for the writing of such a letter was simply stirring up trouble.

3. See quotation T161008, pp.60, 61.

These incidents involved two quite different groups of people both interested in communicating with educationists about their children's problems. Both had made initial effort to communicate. There were, on the one hand, articulate, Western-educated townspeople and, on the other, traditionally-educated people who were articulate in their Aboriginal language, but not in English. The attempts of both groups to discuss and negotiate were fruitless: their situations remained as before.

The incidents are illuminating in that both clearly indicate some of the difficulties facing East Kimberley Aboriginal people wishing to show interest or become involved in the European education process.

INFORMAL CONTROL OF EDUCATION

Aside from formal participation in the schools, families have some control over the education process in other ways such as choice of school, place of schooling, and so on. Informal social controls on education are discussed under the following headings:

- Choice of schools
- Going away versus staying at home
- Catholic or state school?
- Discussion

Choice of Schools

Existing options differ according to the living situation of families.

The towns.

All three towns offer primary schools on site, and in two of the three there is the option of state or Catholic school. For children of secondary age all three towns offer schooling up to Year 10.

Townspeople with whom we spoke were in general mainstream oriented in their outlook, that is in their aims and aspirations for their children. Such people look forward to their children achieving well at school and to their being equipped to enter the workforce or to undertake some form of training which will lead to employment.

The main education problems in the towns, we were told by town respondents, are with children of traditionally oriented families, many of whom attend schools only intermittently in the primary years.

> "The main problem is with the traditional people - coming in, then going out - absenteeism."
> M.Y., young father, officer worker Kununurra
> 27/3/'85

TABLE 6: EXISTING SCHOOLS IN TOWN

	WYNDHAM	KUNUNURRA	HALL'S CREEK
CATHOLIC	Primary	Primary	-
INDEPENDENT	-	-	-
STATE	Primary District High	Primary District High	Primary High

Reasons for this absenteeism were clarified in group and individual interviews. People dwelling on the fringes of towns and people living in the town indicated that government schools do little to acknowledge or advance the traditions of the region, or adjust their programmes to children who come to school with background knowledge which is disjunctive with that of the school and the teachers. The more traditional the background of the child the greater the cultural gap between him/her and the non-Aboriginal school teacher.

People feel this makes for problems which become compounded over time by disillusionment on the part of pupils and teachers, as well as by teasing and fighting in the playground between traditional and non-traditional groups. Often that situation is exacerbated by chronic ill health and in some cases by the trauma of alcoholism in the family.

Schools have made little effort to optimise education opportunities for children whose living conditions are poor, whose opportunities for private study are non existent, and for whom parental help with school problems is not available.

In recent years Catholic schools have made some effort to address requests for a bicultural approach. The consequent trend has been for the two town Catholic schools to have a more traditional student population than the government schools. However, non attendance remains a problem.

It is noteworthy that in meetings with both Yardgee community (on the old reserve site in Hall's Creek) and Lunja community on the outskirts of the same town, the view was expressed that the ideal arrangement would be a school within the community. These are the two groups in this town which appear to have received the least support from the town school in previous years, have the lowest rapport with the school and the highest truancy rate. It would seem impossible under current policies to justify a school at Yardgee, less than 500 metres from the existing school. The stated desire for another school within the community, however, is symptomatic of an urgent need to review the success of the school and relations between school and parents.

In the case of the Kunji group (an isolated family living some 20 kilometres west of Hall's Creek) the preference was for an independent school "like Yiyili". In all three locations, parents with children at the local town school cited social distance, teasing, intergroup fighting and wrongful punishment of children by teachers as the causes of non attendance.

The communities and outstations

Schools are a part of very recent history for communities in the region. Aside from Oombulgurri where a mission school was started in 1914 (Forrest River Mission), and the school at Moolabulla which was closed in the war years, primary schools in most major communities date back only 24-25 years, (for example at Balgo, Christmas Creek and Kalumburu,) and in the case of Turkey Creek, Malan and Billiluna only seven years.

It should not be assumed that because Aboriginal people are moving to outstations that they do not value literacy and numeracy. The very move towards self management is bringing home these needs to community leaders more strongly than ever before. What people value above all, however, is the ability to maintain a strong family support group for the young generation, especially in early childhood.

Education for outstation youngsters is especially problematic. Respondents from all small communities and outstations are strongly in favour of keeping their primary aged children with them. In those locations where schools have been established, parents are convinced that the move has been the right one, even though there are many problems caused by isolation, and lack of funding, infrastructure and resources.

We visited Glen Hill community where a Government primary school opened in 1983. It was built from capital granted by Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia as part of the Argyle Joint Venture "Good Neighbour Policy". This is a well resourced one teacher school, which like other primary schools in small communities, has a high attendance rate. The others are at Yiyili (independent community school) Yarralmun (Ringer's Soak - a Catholic school) and the long established government primary school at Christmas Creek (Wangkajungka Community).

Other small communities and outstations we visited are at various stages of development (Table 8). One is a family group of caretaker/tenants on a pastoral property; several are groups with pastoral leases; some are well established; and others are in the early stages of settlement, not yet over the basic problems of accommodation and reliable water supply, and without security of tenure.

Those small settled groups in which respondents most keenly emphasised the desirability of on-site schooling were:

1. Bow River
2. Doon Doon
3. Maralam
4. Lunja
5. Kunji
6. Yagga Yagga

Spokespersons in these communities gave cogent reasons for keeping their young children with them. Some have already made approaches to education authorities about on-site schooling.

TABLE 7: THE COMMUNITIES AND OUTSTATIONS: EXISTING OPTIONS LARGE COMMUNITIES

Locality	Pre-school	Primary	Secondary	Adult Ed.
Balgo	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic
Billiluna	-	Catholic	-	-
Kalumburu	?	Government	Government (now)	-
Malan (Lake Gregory)	-	Government	-	-
Oombulgurri	?	Government	-	?
Warmun (Turkey Creek)	Catholic	Catholic	Catholic	?
Wangkajungka	AIM	Government	Independent	-

TABLE 8: SMALLER ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES/OUTSTATIONS:

Locality	Stage of Settlement	On site School	Primary School Desired	Nearest Secondary School
Bow River	settled	-	yes	Kununurra
Bungle Bungle	base camp	-	yes	Kununurra
Doon Doon	settled	-	yes	Kununurra
Glen Hill	settled	Govt Primary	existing school	Kununurra
Kambaramba	base camp	-	yes	Kununurra
Kunji	settled (family group)	-	yes	Hall's Creek
Lunja	settled	-	yes	Hall's Creek
Maralam	base camp (settling)	-	yes	Kununurra
Nicholson	transient camp			
Ringer's Soak (Yaralmun)	settled	Cath. Primary	existing school	
Violet Valley	settled	-	?	
Yagga Yagga	settled	-	yes	
Yardgee	settled	town	suggested	
Yunbu	base camp	-	?	
Yiyili	settled	Indep. Primary primary/?	existing school	

Note: Maliarkar, a settled North Kimberley community, is negotiating for a school. We did not manage to contact this community

Three community councillors spoke to me at a meeting of a northern group:

U.U.: "Wi wanna purrum our riport; yu mait kambek - we'll give you the same story ... Independent school. Well wi bin ask for it y'know; datdawayi wi want it here."

B.U.: "Dat da weya ai bin gidap for - in Kununurra ai bin gowin for that skul."

R.R.: "Ai bin ask for independent skul deya la dat Education mob in Kununurra, long taim, two years ago - bifor that Crocodile Hole bin stardimap. Big Gabmin bin kamap."

U.U.: "Wi wanna go luk dat Yiyili. Didjan na wi tokabat; Wat yu plaifor? Wat Gabmin? Djeimwan? Wen yu wurrukum tidja hiya, wat Gabmin yu garra plai? Primary skul wi bin go for ... neba git an answer."

U.U.: We want to give you our statement; should you return we'll tell you the same again. We have already asked for an independent school; that's what we want here.

B.U.: That's the reason I went to speak in Kununurra; I spoke up for a school of that sort.

R.R.: At least two years ago - before Crocodile Hole [another outstation group] was established, I requested an independent school at a meeting with Education department personnel in Kununurra. A senior government official had come up [from Perth].

U.U.: We'd like to see how Yiyili school functions. How do you go about applying for such a school as we want? To what department? The same education department? If you want to employ a teacher, what department do you have to apply to? A primary school we tried for - never got an answer.

R.R. Law woman late 40s, U.U. Community chairman fiftyish, and B.U. councillor, 50s Bow River.
T231089

Respondents from the Bow River group spoke about the arrangement whereby their children go in to the nearest large settlement for primary schooling and about problems of transport and accommodation. No bus is available. Doon Doon (Dunham River), another community further north, has similar problems. They have no school and the distance to the nearest school, some 40 kilometres, means small children staying at the large community all the week and returning home at weekends. Social conditions in the larger community are such that many parents are unhappy with this situation. Doon Doon community also is seeking its own school.

Maralam, yet another outstation community some 80 kilometres from Kununurra, has begun negotiations through the Northern Territory for a bicultural school. Maralam community is a strongly traditional group in which the young children speak the tribal language in day-to-day exchanges round the camp and even when in town. The group members commute from Kununurra to the outstation and are eager to move out permanently to remove themselves from what they see as debilitating and demoralising town surroundings.

> "Wi gidawei burrum dis pleis; dis Kununurra Riserb y'know. They kaan learn nathing. Wai mather and fatha kaan triit da kid propa wei? Samtaim they hangaran hiya la kemp y'know."
> *We are leaving this place, this Kununurra Reserve; children learn nothing here. Why don't parents treat their children properly? Sometimes they just hang around the camp, you know.*
> Muriny-patha speaker, C.T., Nagarra, early 40s, Maralum group KT12064

Lunja Community is a traditional group situated within three kilometres of the central East Kimberley town of Hall's Creek. There is a high rate of absenteeism of children who are enrolled in the local government school. Parents explained their preference for a school in the community as follows: children often come home at lunch time and do not return in the afternoons. Many simply do not go to school at all. Parents feel that their children get into fights too often with others at the school, and are concerned that their traditional values are being undermined.

> "Dey faiting olataim la dat skul; wen day git big, dey wait kip faiting laik dis firs mob."
> *They are always fighting at that school; when they grow up they might still fight, like some other people.*
> T161497

> "...At skul, Kadiya Inglidj i rait ina brein. Wal dat da wai wi - ai want mai kid deya, to, ai wanna meigum tok seimwei laik mi [Djaru]; go langa town, tok Inglidj. Datdawayi wi tokinabat Djaru skul. Wi wan samkaindaba educated pipul hiya tu.
>
> "Wi bin askum det skul for bas; kudin git it. Dey kaan do it.
>
> "[Now] wi bin abum miiding with bishop iya; wi garra abum Katholik skul iya. Wi bin askum bishop for Katholik skul; i bin hepi. Tu younggel dey garra abum. Dey garra larnum Inglis an Djaru sii; wen dey finis skul gadiyawei, afta that they garra larnum Djaru.

> Bishop rekin wi garra weit lilbit longtaim; wan or tu year."
>
> *...At school, the white man's English takes over their minds. Well, ... we - I want my kids to be able to speak my language [Djaru], as well as being able to speak English when they go to town. That's why we're discussing a Djaru school. We want properly educated people in this community too.*
>
> *We asked the [government] school about sending a bus for our kids; we couldn't get it. They can't do it.*
>
> *[Now] we have met here with the Bishop; we will have a Catholic school here. We have asked the Bishop for a Catholic school here; he was happy with the suggestion. They will have two young women [Djaru speakers]. They (the children) must learn English and Djaru. When they finish learning the European way, they will learn Djaru. The Bishop reckons we will have to wait one or two years.*
>
> T161008

Most parents in this community have never attended school and never visit the school. They are very conscious that their children are losing the traditional language and wish to have Djaru taught at school. This is a community in which Kriol is the primary language of the under 35-40 year old age group. Children have a degree of competence, both receptive and simple productive, in the traditional language, Djaru.

If such a scheme should go ahead the community will need to look carefully for Djaru speaking teachers. It is essential that there be a supportive infrastructure through a language/cultural centre for learning materials to be developed. Djaru is a language with small number of speakers but with some prospects of a viable immediate future as at Yaralman (Ringer's Soak) there is a core of young speakers. These two groups, Lunja and Yaralman, are part of one linguistic tradition.

Going away versus staying at home

The towns

Although town schools offer courses to Year 10 level, some children are sent away at the commencement of secondary school, Year 8, so that they can attend a school that offers continuity of education through to Year 12. The adjoining table (Table 9) shows the present numbers of East Kimberley secondary students receiving Aboriginal secondary grants, a fairly accurate indication of numbers attending secondary schools either away or at home.

Town parents tend to send high achieving children to the larger urban centres for secondary schooling. They give two main reasons: they want their children to broaden their horizons and they believe that the standard of education is higher in the larger centres.

TABLE 9: EAST KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL SECONDARY STUDENTS BOARDING AWAY FROM HOME 1985

STUDENTS ATTENDING SCHOOL IN EAST KIMBERLEY				STUDENTS FROM EAST KIMBERLEY BOARDING AWAY TO ATTEND SCHOOL			
School	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Nulumgu	Darwin	Derby	Perth & other
Kununurra	13	5	4	18	8 (3K)	4	6
Wyndham	7	13	13	11	-	-	5
Hall's Creek	25	21	8	14	5 (K)	-	15
Balgo	5	18	2	6	-	-	-
Malan	2	7	2	2	-	-	11 (Balgo)
Yiyili	2	-	-	-	-	-	3 (CAPS)
Turkey Creek	-	-	-	11	-	-	-
Oombulgurri	-	-	-	-	7 (K)	12	2 (at Oomb)
Glen Hill	-	-	-	-	2 (K)		
Kalumburu	-	-	-	9	-	-	1 (PC)
Maliakar	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (Wyndham, Halls Ck)
Billiluna	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Bulla (N.T.)	2	7	-				Boarding Kununurra

Total East Kimberley Aboriginal Secondary students	= 311
Total schooling in the region	= 156
Total schooling away from home (of these 141 are boarders)	= 155

(K) = Kormilda College, Northern Territory
(CAPS) = Christian Aboriginal Parent-Directed School, Coolgardie, Western Australia
(PC) = Pallottine Centre, Perth

(Courtesy Commonwealth Department of Education and Youth Affairs; Aboriginal Secondary Grants statistics.)

> "With us, we always sort of encourage our children to mix in with others you know, sort of mix in not only with Aboriginal people but with European and even other races. And that's one of the reasons why we've sent our children away, mainly because, you know, they're sort of just growing up with the same mob here, and they'll be doing the same thing(s) and it's the same mob year in and year out, and sort of not really getting anywhere. While they're young - I find with my kids going away, they come back really different; they sort of change a lot. When they're there, they're the only Aboriginal kids, and they mix with different races.
>
> "I mean they get called names and that, especially Janie she gets really upset - but that doesn't mean we're gonna pull them out of school and bring them back here. We tell them to keep their chin up and go on the best they can, and then the next letter she'll write back as though nothing really happened!"
>
> F.N. 35 yrs T311080

> "I'd send them to Perth. The education down south and the education in the Kimberleys - the level is like that, the standard of education. [Demonstrates big level differences with hands.] That's the way it is in Perth, a higher standard of education. We can go to third year here [i.e. Year 10] but compared to the third year standard in Perth, its like that! [Demonstates level difference again.]
>
> "That is why, if you send your kid to school, send him to first year in Perth, not second year, not third year, not fifth year, send him in first year."
>
> L.D. 25 yrs T112076

Several respondents discussed the negative effects of social conditions and prejudice influencing their decision to send their children away. Others spoke about the lack of any control over the type of school staff recruited to the area, from principals down. Parents observed that if a principal or teacher is seen to favour non-Aboriginal children or allot blame for misdemeanours wrongly, this is very bad for the morale of Aboriginal students and for community feeling in the town.

Many parents feel that the expense of sending children away is more than most Aboriginal parents can cope with. A 44 year old local government employee told us:

> "What I was told is that you have to maintain 100 secondary students here for three years, and then you become eligible for a Year 11 and 12 programme in that school. Right at the moment all we got is round about 80. There's quite a lot of people still sending their kids

to Perth and Darwin and that. If they held them here for another year, we'll get 100 this year ... so I kept my kids back here for 8 and 9 and sent 'em to Darwin for 10.

"Last year we had four kids in Darwin - cost us a small fortune .. A lot of these people say "oh yeah you can afford to have your kids there because you get a grant, more than us". I said "you look at that grant .. all it does is pay for their books - we still pay for their clothing - and an airfare home twice a year, that all. Their third time of the year, we foot the bill for that. And pocket money". I said, "they get $3 per fortnight - what does that buy them? Plus they give you $19 per fortnight to feed the kid; that doesn't even pay for one weeks lunches". The grant does cover all the excursions though."

Interviewer: "Why did you chose to send them away to Darwin?"

"Well it was closer instead of Perth, and well here at that time the kids weren't getting anywhere with these teachers. It was all a big game to them down here. I'd bring home a video, and they'd say oh we saw that at school ... just a fun one! The teacher'd want to go for a wander off ... they're not bad now since [present principal] has been here.

S.T. 44 yrs T21383

The following is a list of options considered by town parents in placing secondary aged students who want to continue their schooling. They are listed in order of number of times nominated. (Some people nominated more than one alternative.)

Perth
Darwin
Derby
Home town
Port Hedland
Geraldton
Innisfail Queensland

Perth and Darwin were most favoured with 68 per cent of the total 28 nominations. The Kimberley region accounted for 25 per cent of nominations of which 14 per cent were for the home town, the rest for the West Kimberley town of Derby.

While many cited reasons for sending their children away which were similar to those quoted in the three examples above and also included concerns about social conditions and prejudice in the region, most would prefer to see broader options up to year 12 available in their home. The final choice may be influenced more by the presence in a particular town of relatives who can offer reliable support to a student than by the reputation of the particular school.

Religious allegiances also play a part in the choice of school. For example the respondent who chose Innisfail, Queensland as a preferred location was familiar with a particular church school there in which she had great confidence.

In addition to actual options considered by parents, we also asked them about what they would ideally prefer: 'Would you like to have this child schooled in any other place and if so where?' Half nominated their home town or community, approximately a quarter preferred to send their children out of the home community; and the rest either did not answer the question, were undecided, or said it would depend on various factors - such as how able the student was and his/her own preferences.

Although some townspeople indicated that they sent their children away to capital cities because they believed that the standard of education was higher there, not all students are happy away and many return home earlier than anticipated. Town respondents would like to see Years 11 and 12 available in their home towns. Both young and old saw value in schooling at home.

The towns - fringe settlements

There are "reserves", "villages" or town camps near the three towns. We split our sample into people residing permanently in these settlements and people in the process of setting up outstations but living temporarily in the town reserves and commuting between the two. For the purposes of this issue, outstation people whether interviewed in town or out in outstations, were included in the 'community and outstations' comments, and are excluded from the following list.

Permanently settled fringe settlement residents listed their options for high school education as follows: (some people listed more than one of these options) Broome, Darwin, Perth, Port Hedland, Home community.

Of eighteen localities nominated, 44 per cent were in capital cities and 44 per cent were within the Kimberley region (only 17 per cent listed the home community and 28 per cent listed Broome, that is Nulungu College). Preferences with regard to sending their children away or having them educated in the home community were six to nil respectively.

The fringe dwelling people who listed 'away from home' as their education choice for 12 - 14 year olds were generally quite adamant about it because of problems associated with growing up in the home community. These problems concern lack of proper facilities for study, and difficulties associated with racial prejudice, curriculum and standards of local education, and the local social problems of alcohol and misuse of leisure consequent on lack of cultural and recreational opportunities for young people.

Communities

Community people listed the following options as possible for furthering the education of teenagers: Broome, Perth, Home community, Derby, Port Hedland, Away from home, Not at all, Balgo.

As percentages of the total locations nominated, Kimberley locations accounted for 61 per cent and Perth for 32 per cent of the 38 nominations.

Preferences with regard to schooling at home or away were Home 7, Away 12, and No answer/undecided 5. Three of the respondents qualified their answers by saying that both options are necessary. They spoke about individual abilities and career preferences of children, the abilities of children to withstand pressures at home, and the strains and confines of institutional living away from home.

All major communities now have a pool of teenagers who have received limited formal education. Parents are keen to make use of the Aboriginal Secondary /Grants scheme to send children away from home to study. Many young people have in fact studied for varying periods at larger centres and some have met with qualified success. For significant numbers, however, the experience proved to be not a challenge and a stimulus but a trial they could not benefit from because of cultural adjustment difficulties, intergroup fighting and teasing, lack of motivation, homesickness, and so on.

Many parents feel an obligation to send their children away for high school if the opportunity presents itself, and favour either Nulungu College in Broome or State and Catholic High Schools in Perth. Some choose Derby High School or Pundulmarra in Port Hedland. Quite a number, however, are looking to high school education in their home community. Balgo and Turkey Creek both have senior students. Balgo is setting up a secondary school this year with approximately 38 students while Turkey Creek has no official secondary school but runs a class of senior students. Wangkajungka community at Christmas Creek, as described previously, is beginning its own secondary school and Yiyili community has a small number of secondary students. People at the small but nevertheless substantial permanent communities of Malan and Billiluna, both of which have small primary schools, told us that the closest local secondary education available for their teenagers - and that only since 1985 - is at Balgo some 70 kilometres distant.

Parents are not happy with accommodation for secondary students at Balgo. At present it is available for girls but not for boys. Similar social problems obtain in large communities like Balgo, Turkey Creek and Christmas Creek as in the towns - lack of leisure facilities and an urgent need for education for leisure. The problem of social control greatly concerns leaders. The problems are exacerbated by the clash of traditional attitudes, mores and expectations of the older generation with the expectations and hopes engendered in the young by their broader but somewhat insecure exposure to the wider society. Communities such as Malan indicated their concern that young teenagers should have the option of continuing their education on site, while the choice of going away for higher education should to remain for those who would benefit from it. (See statement, Appendix 2.)

We noted that the 35 and over and 45 and over age groups were fairly evenly divided as to the value of keeping teenagers at home versus sending them away. Many were aware of the limitations of both alternatives and saw the need for both options to be available. Younger people tended to value in retrospect their having been away even though some found the experience a negative one at the time one and came home within the first year.

Outstation people

Outstation people see the need for primary education on site. They also see the need for young people to go away to further their secondary education but pointed out the desirability of providing secondary and post-secondary education - high school as well as trades and other skills training - in the local area. Hall's Creek was favoured by respondents in the southern and western communities.

Outstation people are faced with very severe difficulties in educating their children. If the outstation is to be developed the people need to be there; if their children are to be literate they need to either live in or near larger centres or hand over their children to someone else's responsibility. This may be acceptable for senior high school students under some circumstances, but it is felt to be quite unacceptable for primary students and for younger teenagers.

In all communities we were told of the urgent need for education programmes on-site for all age groups. People would like to see in communities secondary programmes which integrate learning and work; where time in the classroom is complemented by time 'in the field' or on the job so that practical experience is gained by youngsters, and at the same time much needed community development is facilitated. In this way young people can see the point of their in-the-classroom work.

Several small communities without schools or education programmes of any sort (excluding the occasional short-term TAFE or other agency supported programme) told us they have approached education authorities about the possibilities of an on-site school and education centre for adults. All such communities indicated that there were young adults in the group who were willing to take an active teaching role with young children while at the same time upgrading their own education.

All communities lacked adequate information about options and alternatives available. Several groups asked specifically that this report inform government of their concern and need for information, and of their preference to have their young primary aged children schooled on site.

Catholic or State School?

The effect of the perceived lack of appreciation by the government school system of the language and culture of Aboriginal people in the towns of Wyndham, Kununurra and Hall's Creek where tradition-oriented families prefer to send their children to a Catholic school. The Catholic schools in general are perceived as showing a greater interest in and respect for the culture of the people. Catholic schools in both Wyndham and Kununurra run programmes in Aboriginal language and culture. These fairly low key programmes are seen by many parents as providing a degree of two-way education, and are taken as an acknowledgement of the culture by the school. Catholic schools request and get a degree of parental involvement and are now making attempts to provide vernacular language programmes. Such programmes depend heavily for their success on the involvement of local vernacular speakers. At the Warmun Turkey Creek Cathlic Community School, a full time linguist is engaged, together with local Kija speakers, in developing literacy materials and a language programme in Kija. At Balgo Adult Education Centre a comprehensive Kukatja programme is being developed. Financial support for this important undertaking is limited and insufficient. Literacy workers with the knowledge essential to the success of the project cannot be paid an adequate working salary. (Personal communication, B. LeFort linguist)

Ad hoc "culture" and "language" lessons have been attempted at various times by most schools in the region. Most have failed: people suggested the following reasons:

- lack of resources and backup from schools;
- lack of adequate infrastructure and planning procedures;
- failure of a salary to eventuate for traditional teachers; and
- failure to involve traditional teachers at all; European teachers have sometimes attempted to teach "Aboriginal culture" to local Aboriginal students, a situation so ludicrous as to have fairly rapidly lost the support of both parents and children.

In town Catholic schools a canteen service is provided where for a nominal charge children can obtain breakfast and a midday meal. State schools do not generally provide these services, although one government school servicing a large community provided for some time hot showering facilities for children coming to school from homes where such facilities did not exist.

While in recent years traditional parents have opted for Catholic schools in the towns and Catholic or independent community schools in outlying communities, not all of them reject the government system. Oombulgurri and Kalumburu appear to be satisfied with their government primary schools on site. The latter community has applied for a secondary addition to the existing school and this is expected to go ahead in the near future. We were told by chairmen and senior councillors that importance is placed on co-operation between school and school council in providing traditional teaching through the school by elders. Co-operation at present is excellent. In 1984, for the first time since the early mission days, ceremonies took Kalumburu boys through the Law. A lot of cultural knowledge has been lost to the young and people are keen to inculcate respect for tradition. At the same time, we were told, the community is firmly committed to the government school. They hope for continued education developments to include strong school council participation in decision making, the development of better educational facilities for the Carson River outstation, and adult education and training facilities in the community proper.

Until government policy supports education developments in line with Aboriginal community priorities, isolated communities such as this one will depend heavily on co-operation and advice from the school principal. The school principal in turn is in a position to convey community needs to the department, but is limited in the extent to which he/she can direct meaningful action and resources into programmes. Likewise the danger is high that, in the translation of needs from isolated Kimberley communities through European school principals to planning and finance departments 3000 kilometres away in Perth, ideas and priorities will be distorted.

Town populations of mainly mainstream oriented parents have tended to favour government schools. This is partly due to the movement of the traditional people back to traditional lands. One major effect for town Catholic schools is the instability of their enrolments. Numbers have dropped as people have moved out to new settlements. Other people setting up outstations commute constantly but irregularly between town and settlement. This means children are sometimes at school and sometimes not.

Town parents felt that although the Catholic schools in many ways were preferable to the state schools, difficulties in catering for itinerant children in the classes, as well as amalgamation of classes as numbers reduced, had combined to make teaching less effective for their children in recent years. Many townspeople have moved them to the government school. Here they find more emphasis on the academic skills of reading and writing, but less personal interest in the children by the teachers. In the Catholic school they felt there was not enough homework given to children; at the government school many people feel that the tendency is to lump Aboriginal students in the 'too hard basket', without giving them a little extra attention when they have difficulty in understanding.

The attitude to Catholic and government schools in one town was described as follows by this mother, who moved her children to the government school so they would "pick up things quick".

> "I have nothing to do with that school [the state school] because it's sterile ... I just drop my kids off, pick them up and come home. Whereas at the convent I'd go there, help out ... There was a really good teacher. Every couple of weeks I'd spend a couple of days there, having morning tea with the kids there, really good. At the state school the teachers don't even talk. Like, my children's teacher will talk, but no-one else ... You say hello and they just look at you. Its really sterile. There is a parent group but its just all the cliquey white women ... like I see the same mothers there when I pick up my kids - a lot of their kids are in the same class as --- but the mothers don't even talk! It's really a stuck up town."
>
> KT21150

Many people with whom we spoke opposed the government school 'project class' system, as the following comments indicate:

> "Project classes are where Aboriginal kids who are too hard for the teachers to handle are put"
>
> 25 year old mother, town

> "Project classes are no good - project kids are out fishing while others are learning."

> "Project classes where people are doing lawn-mowing are no good. They should be doing literacy. Schools should stick to reading and writing."
>
> Group meeting, northern fringe settlement
> 28/3/'85

> "Project classes are no good - they might teach kids to keep the streets clean but they're no good for anything else ... black people need more study."

> "Project not education; you don't call that education. But it's changed now."
>
> 42 year old fringe settlement mother

> "When you introduce these project classes in schools, a lot of kid inclined to sort of wish they was in a project class, becauses they feel the boys that go down the project are not sort of in class; they're more free, they can have a yarn. But the child's not sort of being stimulated ... a lot of kid missing out on paperwork. [You might say to a kid who is not in the project class]: those kids who are in project are not so good at this and that, whereas you are; what's the point you being in project when you can be in here learning more about science and maths ... a lotta kids they see them boys on the back of a car racin' down town an they want to be in the project class too."
>
> Father, outlying community T461036

This speaker (29 year old community building project worker) feels that it is important that there should be excursions and other extra mural activities in all school classes. "Aboriginal culture could come in here," he said.

SUMMARY

In summary, for some town parents the government schools are seen to offer a better deal educationally than Catholic schools; others see Catholic schools as offering more individual teaching and an atmosphere of respect for the background of Aboriginal people. Some people found that their children tended to be 'lumped' with children in 'project' classes in the high school years, where academic teaching (that is, the fundamental principles of literacy and learning) did not have high priority in the curriculum.

For town parents, informal control of education through choice of schools is exercised with less difficulty because more options are available.

In outlying communities and outstations more emphasis is placed on traditional lifestyles, and everyday contacts with the mainstream society are less frequent. Therefore educational needs are seen to be different.

PART 3

REGAINING CONTROL

"What the young Aboriginal want is a chance to prove that they can do what anybody else can do, maybe even better"

24 year old
fringe camp

CHAPTER 6: SOME PROBLEMS IN PARTICIPATION

> "What ideas has the community got for this place?
>
> "They have plans and dreams but sometimes they seem hopeless."
>
> Mother, 24 years old

It is essential that the Aboriginal community in the East Kimberley gains a greater degree of control over the future of its children. Young adults we interviewed stressed the need for more adequate adult education courses in the region and deplored the lack of both long and short-term courses in a wide variety of areas from basic literacy and numeracy to training and apprenticeship opportunities for the young.

Poor living conditions, lack of recreation facilities and the interrelated problems of misuse of alcohol, prejudice and lack of incentive induced through lack of employment opportunities were all listed by respondents as factors contributing to a poor educational environment. Directly or indirectly these factors affect everyone. At both primary and secondary level peer pressures not to attend school reflect the lack of perceived relevance and usefulness of education.

A number of respondents in the 16-35 age group indicated firmly that the existing social climate of the East Kimberley is not conducive to teenage Aboriginal students making good progress at school. They maintain that at present sending secondary aged students away to school at an urban centre is the only viable option.

On the other hand parents who already have children at secondary level while making similar comments about the social situation at home, are aware of the problems of schooling away from home. Those people have found that peer pressures and intergroup teasing and fighting can be as much of a problem away from home as in the home district. Children have experienced problems of adjustment in hostels and schools of the north west, the Kimberley and elsewhere. Problems often stem from town versus outlying community rivalry, rivalries between linguistic groups and so on.

Perhaps a clue to the reasons why these problems have persisted lies in the comments of two communities (Lamboo and Lunja) about the importance of linguistic allegiances. Group identity is strong, and the need to maintain self esteem and pride in one's inheritance is a matter of primary importance. The evidence suggests that slights and insults flung in children's groups can easily flare or aggravate intergroup animosities.

In past years animosities have actually been fostered by the education system. Parents often have little cause for confidence in the ability of the outsiders to sort out such problems. Yet in the social circumstances and power structures of today, groups are ill placed to sort out such problems themselves without contributing to general insecurity, mistrust and apathy in the group.

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Respondents believe that older Aboriginal people have the ability to cope with these sorts of problems. They suggested that there should be increased participation by local Aboriginal people in the management and staffing of hostels, which are seen as an important and necessary part of the infrastructure for education in the region.

POOR ATTENDANCE

Poor school attendance was seen to be a major factor in many children's poor academic record. The following are some factors suggested by respondents as being important reasons for absenteeism..

1. **There is a lack of familiarity** of traditional parents with the requirements of western schooling, particularly the critical need for continuity of attendance, punctuality and so on. Often illiteracy in the home is a problem for young children conveying messages by notes. School requirements not met lead to 'shame' (embarrassment) for the child and eventually contribute to a feeling of inadequacy and avoidance of attending.

2. **Aboriginal traditions, customs** of child rearing and patterns of movement are at variance with school regimes. Both town and out of town respondents see schooling problems as most severe among children of traditional families. Children are highly valued in Aboriginal society. Mothers, aunties and grannies like to have children around the home and do not always see the benefits of having them away all day schooling especially if they are not eager to go or some traditional activity is on, for example, food gathering or a ceremony at which in the normal course of events the child would participate - even if peripherally. They regard such activities as traditional education. Similarly, children will not be sent to school if a ceremony of importance, such as a funeral, requires the family to observe traditional customs.

3. **Ill Health.** Speaking about priorities for action in improving educational opportunities in the region, C.N., 41 year old father, a health worker in a major East Kimberley town said:

> "If you only look at one area, you can possibly do something; but then in my way of thinking, you can't just look at one area, because it all ties in; if you're not healthy, you can't learn, if you can't learn, you can't go on ..."
>
> , C.N. T7285

Health as such was not often listed as a cause of immediate concern: certain health issues however came up time and time again;

> "They sick all the time"

was suggested as a cause of truancy, particularly among traditional families.

One element in traditional attitudes towards health - and life in general - is a high regard for stoicism and courage in the face of pain and discomfort. These attitudes are still prevalent today. Although undoubtedly in present social circumstances this can be seen as a necessary coping technique, a predisposition to this line of thinking also often works against Aboriginal people's best interests when it comes to seeking early help in sickness, or changing conditions which may cause sickness.

3.1 **Physical ill-health**

(i) Nutrition

People, in and around the towns particularly, attributed some absence from school partly to children from some homes not being supplied from home with lunch or the money to buy lunch at school. Some children may also not have eaten an adequate - or indeed any - breakfast before school.

(ii) Skin diseases

Skin diseases such as impetigo, scabies and pediculosis may not be immediately obvious as contributing to educational failure, but clearly from information I have been given by respondents, there is throughout the region a high incidence of these diseases which can cause constant and distracting discomfort. The importance of these health factors as a cause of primary school absences and of course poor performance cannot be underestimated. The following statistics, provided by courtesy of the Health Department of Western Australia (School Health Service), give some indication of the extent of the problem in the early, formative school years.[1]

TABLE 10: SKIN DISEASES TOTAL KIMBERLEY REGION 1984

	Pre-primary to Year 7	Years 8 to 12	Total
Pediculosis	1242	103	1345
Scabies	97	2	99
Impetigo	55	1	56
Ringworm	68	4	72

(iii) Hearing defects

A few people noted that many children had bad ears. One 20 year old young man offered the explanation that "a lot of kids are deaf" in response to why verbal communication between teachers and students was so poor. The same opinion was voiced by a 35 year old mother in an isolated community.

A town father, C.N. (by occupation a health worker) in a northern East Kimberley town noticed that East Kimberley children were affected

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1. It must be kept in mind that, as the information was gathered by school nurses, it may not include examination of children not at school at the time of the examination

by the same germs and same diseases which plague the countries of the "third world". He estimated that a quarter or more of the Aboriginal primary school children in the town would have chronic ear trouble, some to the extent that they cannot hear clearly what the teacher is saying.

Although pertaining only to one of the three towns, the following figures obtained from the Health Department of Western Australia indicate the seriousness of the problem, and that this father is absolutely correct in his concern.[1]

These data then indicate that C.N.'s estimate of one-quarter of Aboriginal primary school children in his town as having chronic ear trouble, is in fact an underestimate in the case of the town below.

TABLE 11: PERFORATIONS OF THE EAR DRUM - EAST KIMBERLEY TOWN SCHOOL 1984

	P/P	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	YR 6	YR 7	YR 8
Dry Perforations	4	13	12	5	12	10	10	6	
Perforations with discharge	15	19	13	8	7	14	9	6	

Above school total primary enrolment 1984 = 285
Total perforated ears, primary = 163

This means that at the time this information was assembled in 1984 over half (57.2 per cent) of the total primary enrolment in this town was suffering from perforated ear drums. The following additional information pertains to two major Aboriginal communities in the region and again bears out the concern of the few parents who commented on the effects of ill health on the education of children.

Chronic ear disease and hearing loss present a considerable problem for children in many Aboriginal communities.

Children were screened at an outlying school in second term 1985 and twenty-five (25) out of the total of sixty-three (63) were found to have hearing loss.

Similarly at another school thirty-one (31) children from an enrolment of eighty-five (85) were found to have hearing loss.

That is, at the former school 40 per cent of the total and at the latter school 36 per cent of the total enrolment were found to be suffering from loss of hearing.

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[1] The figures quoted pertain not to the town referred to by C.N. but another town - indicating yet again the ubiquity of the problems.

(iv) Anaemia

Another health problem likely to detract from a child's optimum performance is anaemia.

Thus in the 1984 health examinations at one East Kimberley town school for example, 15 cases of anaemia were identified among the primary enrolment of 285. Some symptoms of anaemia are exercise intolerance, malaise and weakness - surely not conducive to eager participation in school work

TABLE 12: ANAEMIA FOUND IN CHILDREN -
EAST KIMBERLEY TOWN SCHOOL 1984

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
6	3	1	1	1	2	1	1

(v) Trachoma

TABLE 13: TRACHOMA IDENTIFIED IN SCHOOL CHILDREN
WHEN TOTAL SCHOOL WAS SCREENED - EAST
KIMBERLEY TOWN 1984

P/P	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
44	28	30	29	29	25	6	4	5

That is:

Total primary enrolment 1984 = 285
Trachoma identified in = 195

This constitutes 70 per cent of the total primary enrolment.

Trachoma is seen to be 'no longer a problem' by one Health Department medical spokesperson, as cases of blindness no longer occur and treatment programmes are said to be 'under control'. Even so these statistics from the department are not comforting.

In one larger Aboriginal community I was told how the two government primary school teachers, in their own time, performed the necessary regular treatments on trachoma-identified children. Not all parents are aware of the implications of non-treatment.

It should be noted that all figures quoted from "an East Kimberley town school" pertain to one school only, that is a high proportion of those students examined were clearly suffering from multiple diseases in that same period.

Forty-four year old shire employee S.T. maintained that there was an urgent need for Aboriginal Medical Service Centres to become involved in health education programmes in the schools. The suggestion seems to be an important one.

The relevance of C.N.'s comment

> 'If you're not healthy you can't learn. If you can't learn you can't go on..."

is very clear. The answer, he feels, lies in improved conditons and "education of everyone" (T72150).

3.2 **Social Problems:** for example drunkenness, sick parents, guardianship (conflicts of expectations traditional/modern), hunger, clothing, apathy.

Social ill-health in the home, manifested as alcoholism of one or both parents or of older family members was seen as a major concern with regard to absenteeism of children from school in some families in each town. Children whose parents are affected suffer in many ways; the consequences are often that children from affected families are poor school attenders. They therefore suffer educationally. Alcoholic parents, it was said, are not in a position to provide money, lunches, clean clothes, or even interest and moral support to their children or the children in their care. Social problems may include fear or mistrust of Gadiya and self-depreciation. The need for alcohol rehabilitation programmes and alcohol useage education programmes was mentioned by health workers, teacher aides and some parents.

4. Resistance to schooling

In some cases people have indicated there may be actual resistance to schooling. This may be categorised as resistance by parents to schooling as it is structured today, or to aspects of the school experience, and resistance to schooling by secondary aged children, who generally have a larger say than primary children about whether or not they will go to school.

Resistance by parents seems to derive from two sources. In the first, parents who believe their children's stories and have themselves had bad experiences do not push their children to attend school. More than once I have was told by a parent that if his child was 'pushed around' or punished wrongly by a teacher, he (the parent) would certainly not force the child to go to school. His child, one parent told me, was always welcome to play round at home. If he found school a pleasant experience he could go; if not he could make up his own mind whether or not he attended (approximately 38 year old Djaru father B.T.)

The other category of resistance relates to parents who have no faith or trust in teachers or do not know them personally. Conversely, they feel that teachers have no faith or trust in them. A thirty-five year old town mother with many years experience in local welfare administration suggested that the community and the school staff should get together:

> "Yes, we never have that; we never see teachers go out into the community and sit and talk to the older people. I mean - they invite them to P & C meetings - but what's that! I don't go to P & C meetings myself! I mean I think once in a while the teacher should make an effort to go out to the people. Explain to the people what their side of education's all about; you'll notice all the Aboriginal people will say yes we want our kids to go to school. But they haven't come up with an answer what they want their kids to be taught because white people don't go out to them to ask them. Teachers I mean.
>
> "Somebody like you, yeah. I mean you're [someone they know] and they know that you are somebody from the University doing this and this - but you're not the school! But if they'd see a teacher coming out there ... they'll know they're talking to the teacher about something! What they want their kids to do ..."
>
> T341302

Getting to know people is important to traditional people. This respondent suggested that benefits accruing from this survey could have been further increased if I had taken a teacher from the school out to the traditional communities, so that direct contact between the two groups could have been initiated.

In answer to the question "What kinds of things should Europeans learn about that would help them understand Aboriginal people better?" this respondent wrote as follows:

> "1. To trust Aboriginal people
>
> 2. Europeans should be more friendly to Aboriginals
>
> 3. To understand more about Aboriginal ways."

Another respondent in another town, a 36 year old mother, wrote in answer to the same question:

> "Europeans should learn to trust Aboriginal and be more friendly ... teachers should spend time and have patience."

These concerns about the lack of interaction between parents and teachers were tempered by concern among some parents who feared that they might lose their children to Gadiyas. Old people, in particular, harbour this fear.

> "Too much read and write' you know, 'we can't get them now to do proper thing; got to put the pressure on - but still not good enough

> because they have to go back to school'. Old people are battling hard with the young fellas."
>
> (60 yr old father and grandfather R.T. KT121627 family group on block of town)

People feel that school encourages loss of language and tradition:

> "Ai garra dalim, [or] mai waip, 'gidum djanguliny'. Nathing! I kaan anasten 'wood'! Bikas la skul, Kadiya Inglis rait ina brein! *If I or my wife say to them 'get djanguliny!' No response! They can't understand the word 'wood'! Because at school, the white man's English takes over their minds.*
>
> (Senior councillor, town community T161002)

> One thing they are all worried about. I hear it in bush meetings I attend - is their kids coming back and not listening to them, traditional way, you know. So they worry about that. They don't like the idea of sending their kids away to school."
>
> (Young man, government employee East Kimberley town KT11187)

Part of that concern is the perceived need to keep family together. This is particularly difficult if one is involved in the outstation movement.

> "If our kids go to school in Balgo, they'll go away from our controlling. We can't control 'em from here, from Yagga Yagga."
>
> (outstation spokesperson)

> "Girls are alright, but boys they got no-one to look after them in Balgo; they've got relations there, but the boys tend to be like a mob of sheep, running round anywhere. That's why we want to try to get a school for the boys here. When they grow up a bit, and get a bit of education, we'll send them down to high school."
>
> (32 year old father, Malan community, 70 kms from Balgo, T412132)

The parents of this family prefer to send their high school children to Perth to give them broader experience particularly with English, so that they can come back and work at skilled jobs in the community, at the same time they feel strongly that primary aged children should be with their parents. The school at Malan is a junior primary school.

> "Some kids didn't grow up with other persons, you know; they didn't grow up with other relations; relations are alright but they didn't grow up with them; they've been with their mother and father all the time."
>
> (Mother, Malan T412128 from the Kriol)

A 38 year old father, part of a group endeavouring to establish an outstation out from Kununurra spoke about his eight year old son:

> "He is supposed to be going to school, but when he asks if he can come out bush with us, we let him come. If the parents are not here - kids can't live with other people if the parents are going back to the station again. Kids don't want to stop here with other people ... what we are trying to think about is making some sort of a school out in the bush; putting some sort of a teachers aide out there to give them a bit of education every day; something like that."
>
> (D.K. Djangala, T121291)

Many town children "bail up" - stay away from school without parents knowing. Some children lack discipline and supervision we were told; "some kids here just take off without parents knowing". Hence some parents are reluctant to have their children stay with other people while they are on the outstation.

Absenteeism is also high when parents are involved in traditional matters. Travel over more than one day to a ceremony or meeting necessitates taking children.

> "[There are times] when if [my traditional relations] had to have a ceremony during school time, they'd just go away from school, that's it; no two ways about it. It's important to them. People take their kids with them when they travel away from home because they are closely knitted families; you can't break them. I do that too; if I'm going anywhere I take my kids with me."
>
> (R.C. 35 yr old town government employee T342150)

Finally, in some communities there is the very real problem of distance from school (Bow River, Violet Valley, Kunji group, Red Hill (Lunja), Malan and so on). The possibility of a school bus system or systems to transport children from some outlying communities to the nearest school has been discussed previously.

Secondary absenteeism and dropout may involve:

(a) any of the previous factors. Additional disadvantages for the adolescent Aboriginal student at school include

(b) lack of appropriate courses,

(c) peer pressure, lack of incentive and

(d) unhappy experiences in class. Prominent among the last are linguistic and cultural misunderstandings between students and teachers and poor comprehension of class material. Several younger educated people with teaching experience noted that English reading and comprehension levels of high school students were often at mid-primary level, making high school level work difficult (for verification of these observations the reader may refer to ERDC Report No.13:1977).

(5) **Prejudice between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students; also tribal differences and inter-Christian antagonisms, teasing, gangs.**

Prejudice from other children and teachers is a strong disincentive in adolescent years. Town parents noted the ill effects of prejudice on their children; some noted that prejudice occurs on 'both sides' (T12345). Many stressed the importance of both groups (non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) mixing. Indeed this is an often quoted reason for people sending their children to the state school. There are sometimes antagonisms between 'coloured and traditional kids' (T92123). 'Prejudice intimidates kids young' I was told (T81340). It affects teenagers' confidence in looking for jobs, and can even affect non-Aboriginal teachers if they are seen to 'take time out to help Aboriginal kids'.

> "It's hard to get jobs in the Kimberleys simply because of your colour; it's not what you are but who you are; it's very hard. A lot of Aboriginal people here can't get a job, yet the white people get lots of jobs; in [this town] anyway; it's a sort of prejudiced town although it's been better lately, in the last few months there have been people employed.
>
> Up at the hospital a lot of coloured people were standing up for jobs ... all white women get them so the coloured people just give up hope. And yet you see all these ones [white people] that go away, leave town for a few months, come back and they get the job again.
> (Middle-aged mother, northern town T141075)

These factors are compounded by the lack of a sense of purpose among the young, no jobs following. We were told often that young people lose hope when returning to the region from schooling and training to find no jobs available.

> "Kids go away but come back and can't use their education - no jobs."
> (T151110)

> "They shouldn't let them leave school unless they've got a job that they can go to or a job lined up for them or they should teach them a trade or something at school...."
> (T312116)

> "If Comm. Ed. are into sending kids away, they should find them a little apprenticeship or something when they come back."
> (T462023)

FURTHER RESEARCH

Further discussion in this area needs to involve teenagers, teaching assistants and teachers. The stated need is for improved communication between parents, children and school staff. Secondary education then is seen to pose:

(a) difficulties if going away for education
  - prejudice
  - loneliness
  - homesickness
  - lack of encouragement from teachers

(b) difficulties if staying at home
  - restricted options
  - lower standard of education
  - peer pressures
  - lack of study facilities at home
  - lack of stimulating incentive to study
  - only correspondence courses at Year 11 and 12 level.

DISCUSSION

The evidence points to the likelihood that some traditionally conservative people believe that by restricting access to, or at least not insisting on utilisation of Gadiya schooling by children, they will ensure their control of traditional education. There is some truth in this, both in relation to language and Aboriginal concepts and behavioural mores. However in relation to Aboriginal ideals, goals and aspirations today this does not seem to be a productive or constructive viewpoint. Neither does it appear to be the predominant one.

This philosophy may not be as effective as its proponents think. Children may end up worse off because they are neither truly traditionally competent nor truly competent in the educated skills of the wider society. East Kimberley traditional people speak of such people as having 'fallen down in the middle' between the two cultures.

The overwhelmingly predominant view of respondents in this survey was that the young must become competent in the wider society. To do this, we were told, they have to acquire literacy and numeracy, (and by and large this is where traditional communities "are at"). Once equipped with literacy and numeracy the parents indicated they need further education in order to enter trades and professions and so assist in regional development, particularly of outlying communities and outstations.

In general, western oriented part-Aboriginal families in towns have experienced already a generation or two of closer contact and familiarity with mainstream Australian ways than tradition-oriented people in outlying communities. In previous years and up to the present some people have attempted to direct their children to the education system of the wider society - keeping them at school and sending them away for further education, (often at some emotional cost to families and students). These people now urge development of higher education facilities in the region, and broader opportunities for their secondary aged children to learn and use work skills. Many town parents are seriously concerned about the lack of training in job skills and the lack of jobs.

These people urged that this report speak up for the development of further education facilities in the region and broader opportunities for their secondary-aged children.

Specifically people suggest the development of:

(1) high school options relevant to the local job scene and the development of communities, and the establishment of Year 11 and 12 courses in high schools;

(2) appropriate community education options (for example mechanics, bookkeeping, concrete work, literacy, community development, and adult education in the community;

> "... a course in which to start from the bottom at one's own pace."
> (27 year old stenographer, town mother)

(3) job opportunities;

(4) development of recreation opportunities and skills for leisure;

(5) adult education;

(6) homework classes appropriately staffed and situated.[1]

SUMMARY

In large measure then, people see the solution to these problems as lying in appropriate on-site education, training and employment opportunites. This means not only primary and secondary education on site in towns and major communities, but post secondary adult, technical and tertiary education. People envisage participation in education by local people at all levels as both learners and teachers. There could be a comprehensive diversified overall approach.

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1. See also list of training needs page

CHAPTER 7: TWO WAY SCHOOLING

DIVERSITY

> "we had a meeting the day before [about education] and H.T. came in from [a traditional community]. And all the townspeople, they sort of wanted their children to be taught Aboriginal things; and H.T., the most traditional of us there - he said the main thing they wanted for their kids was to learn to read and write! It was just the opposite to what the others wanted!"
>
> (35 yr old mother teaching assistant,
> town school T312094)

While the difference of emphasis between town groups and the generally more traditional out-of-town groups is crucial to an understanding of education problems in the East Kimberley, it is equally crucial to realise that both groups are seeking an education system which will equip their children to compete equally with children from the mainstream Australian society. Both groups want to see a system which will achieve and maintain a "way through" for young people from an Aboriginal East Kimberley upbringing to cope with ease with the mainstream concepts and way of life. They want to develop a system of education which will enable each person to be educated to as high a level as she or he desires and is capable of, in order to be a productive person in the community. They want to develop a system of education which caters for diversity with diversity. They are not short of ideas on how to bring this about.

Some needs are shared while some are specific to town or outlying groups; categories are not watertight. But the dichotomy is in perceived means: there is a shared end view of a bicultural person.

To create equal opportunities for East Kimberley children the people of the East Kimberley want to see their children taught successfully in their early years to handle high school material in their teens. Success in the secondary years, they maintain, will allow those who choose to remain in (or return to) the Kimberleys to fill the jobs that, with continued community development, should become increasingly available. These positions are at present largely filled by temporary workers from the cities. Alternatively it will allow them to enter into technical trades training or tertiary education courses and thus again fit them for employment and and so enable them to contribute to the development of the region.

Because of the diversity of experience, family background, living conditions and way of life that characterises the East Kimberley, if this view is to become reality for the children of the region it is thought that there must be different approaches to their education. A unifying factor throughout these discussions was the solidarity of local townspeople with community people on the need for recognition of cultural identity as the starting point for a balanced education for

East Kimberley Aboriginal children. Another major issue was the need for a firmer basis in literacy and numeracy for children thanthey have - in general - been able to achieve to date.

Strategies to achieve these two aims were suggested. Successful implementation of education policies aimed at raising the level of Aboriginal people's control over their lives in the region will be through diversification and flexibility of teaching programmes, and the granting to Aboriginal communities responsibility for themselves and their comunities It was proposed that those in power must listen, and facilitate participation in education.

OUTSTATIONS

Groups have moved out from every major settlement and town we visited to resettle traditional land. Some of these settlements are now becoming established as pastoral holdings, for example Bow River and Doon Doon; some are "small blocks just for living", for example, Lamboo, Ringers' Soak. Some groups have tenure, others do not; security in land is the first essential for groups working to invest in future enterprises of any kind. Education is one of the first essential services communities would like to see developed after basic necessities of water, housing and communication have been met. A Chairman of a northern community told us:

> "Until land business is settled, we're still struggling."
> Field notes 4/3/85

There appear to be difficulties in the financing of school buildings on land which is not yet legally under secure tenure of some sort. Likewise, minimum standard housing requirements must be met before State Government Education Department teachers can be employed. Such obstacles virtually preclude the setting up of permanent education structures in outstations at present.

Outstation groups are concerned about education. Those with whom I spoke (Kambaramba, Bow River, Bungle Bungle, Ringers' Soak, Nicholson mob, Jalyirr (Yunbu), and Yagga Yagga were some of them) are in various stages of development and permanent occupation. Some groups are settled in tents or bough shelters or self constructed tiny houses (for example, Maralam, and a recently formed Billiluna Outstation group) and carry water by hand from a natural source (for example, Jalyirr group at Yunbu). Many such settlements are semi-permanent as members must be in constant touch with town or the nearest community for services like schools, stores and medical centres. Others which have been established a little longer have prefabricated one or two roomed metal shacks - one per family - and a bore sunk. Yet others, for example Ringers' Soak, in addition to metal shacks, have received financial assistance to erect communal ablution facilities.

These groups generally consist of three or four generations of a linguistic unit or tribal group. I use the term 'outstation' in this report in a general sense, to refer to such small settlements as described above: recently developed satellite settlements around major towns or communities which serve them as resource and service centres.

None of these establishments, some of which have been in existence for a number of years, has a government school. Apart from one attempt at Yunbu by an individual family to make use of the services of Distance Education - fraught with major problems of communication, distance and adequate supervision - there has been no Government initiative in making provision for distance education or mobile education units in preschool, primary or secondary schooling, or in adult education. Education is urgently needed and has been sought by some groups who, to the best of their ability and their meagre resources, attempt to gain access to whatever is available in the nearest serviced settlement.

The Outstation Movement; the reasons.

As this report shows, traditional communities indicated to us both their interest in maintaining control of their children's education and the difficulties involved. One of the manifestations of the desire to assert some control over the life of the younger generation and thus some control over the future of the group has been the outstation movement. Now an established movement with a vision of future, it is not only a return to traditional lands for the sake of their spiritual significance, but a deliberate attempt by the people to take control of the lives of the group; a move to give purpose and meaning to life away from the earlier refugee settlements and camps on the fringes of the towns. The resettlement of traditional lands is more than a dream of the old with nostalgic memories of the past. It is a move by many of the young, who share the vision for the future. In this context traditional people are looking at education in a very careful light.

> "We've got young people now who can help in the [out] station. We just got tent at the moment; materials here now [in town] for building - we're waiting for truck to take it out. My boys workin' here painting, doing odd job. [In the town settlement]. Building training especially we'll be looking at. Eldest boy would like to be doing mechanic job....
>
> "In the future, we want to get stockwork - there's 4,000 acres - buying cattle and horses; we'll be doing stockwork and gardening; gardening that'll be the first thing, to sell things in the town."
>
> 38 yr old northern outstation spokesperson

Talking about the problems of living in the fringe settlement in town, this respondent went on:

> "Outstation school'd - be better I reckon - all the kids together; well our mob they all related to each other - they get along together - it'd be good out there.
>
> "Old L--- [senior woman] 'll be out there teaching [about language and culture]. We've had a bit of trouble with the kids round town. The parents are not here; they [the kids] can't live with other people if they're [the parents] going back out to the [out] station again; so the kids don't want to go to school - don't want to stop with other people ..... we're tryna make

> a school out in the bush, an get some sort of a teacher aide out there .....
>
> D.K. 38 yrs T121291

D.K. lives with his family in a town Reserve (or "village" as it is now officially known) through the Wet season while trying to establish the outstation settlement. He goes on to describe the town situation:

> "These days when they come out of school - finish school - they just do what they like; we've had a bit of trouble. There's nothing here so they can be trained; no jobs to train for. Hangin' round here, home, do washing up, then [nothing]. Our mob do come out [and work] if there's something for them to do - there's nothing for them to do; nothing to be trained here. That's where the Centre (Community Learning Centre) come in".
>
> 609

Eighteen year old Muriny-patha speaker from a strong community of traditional Muriny-patha people, listed his ambition as to go away and train in mechanics and music, then come back to live at the outstation already begun by the group, teaching younger people his skills. In answer to Q7 he said:

> "[I'd] like to go to another place training, for a change, to learn about mechanics and guitar. But I don't know where to ask..."
>
> (C1)

His plans were to help in the building of cattle yards at the outstation and he spoke of the immediate need there for bore, lighting plant, houses, airstrip, garden, small clinic and radio. This respondent was one of five young men employed for a short building training course under the Commonwealth Employment Programme. All of them felt that such courses were too short.

The merits of the decision to move out of the towns has already been indicated in a variety of ways - some improvement in health has been noted in groups living - even periodically - a more traditional lifestyle. (K. O'Dea, 1984:596-603). Concerning a group of Mowanjum people with whom O'Dea collaborated in experimental medical research, an earlier paper states:

> "Many expressed the desire to go back to their traditional country and live there permanently - partly living off the land and partly having good western food. They saw this as their only chance of controlling their own lives again, and they realised that it was only by regaining power over their own lives that they could come to grips with many of their health problems - diabetes and heart disease being only two amongst many. Alcohol is seen as a much more damaging problem.
>
> "When the people in this study went back to their own land - even for only a few weeks - they changed greatly. Not

> only did their health improve, but so, it seemed to me, did their self respect. In this sense there is a direct relationship between health, the outstation movement and land rights."
>
> O'Dea 1984:20-21

Other positive outcomes of the outstation movement are to be seen in the emergence of new groups and leaders, and the re-emergence of old, the growing awareness of the networks and institutions of the wider society, the renewed intellectual vigour that comes with meetings, negotiations and discussions which have on many occasions brought about observable improvements for the groups, and so on. So far it is clear to traditional people that in many ways the move has been the right one, but there are many problems, hopefully solvable they say by the right education for the younger generation.

Outstation people with whom we spoke emphasised the desirability of young children remaining with their parents, and the desirability of having parents involved in schooling. They also made the point that some young people benefit from going away for education and mixing with other people, perhaps in the later years of schooling or when they have finished school, to participate in training courses.

> "When they're finished school, we'll have to send them away to learn about such things as driving and repairing vehicles and machinery. Those we sent off to town for education got spoiled; maybe this lot will be better; now we have two schoolteachers, they can learn, bit by bit. Train them for work when they finish school; we hope they will learn Gadiya things - about cars, aeroplanes - maybe cooking, driving, maintaining the water-pump, operating the wireless and so on, and still be part of their own culture, speaking their own language.
>
> "They might work at the school or the garage in Hall's Creek - I don't know what they'll want to do when they're grown up, but our young people always seem to come back home to their country - can't leave the place! Maybe in the future they'll take over the work that needs to be done here - we have our own cattle - and maybe work on other stations when work's available. We've got to think carefully about work."
>
> Executive member Kundat Djaru
> edited translation from Kriol statement
> July 85.

A comprehensive statement with perceptive and ordered comments about the concerns of another outstation group was made by a spokesperson from Yagga Yagga, over 80 km into the Great Sandy Desert from the nearest major settlement of Balgo. This statement was made at a meeting of community members to discuss education issues for this report. The bulk of the statement can be consulted in Appendix 3.

Two excerpts however state the position so often expressed to us by outstation groups:

> "We should have a little school here, little school for the little kids ......"
>
> T431012

> "I want to say I don't want to see my young people going only to school, but I want to see a two-side school going on."
>
> T431070

Outstation groups need on-site primary schools, and two-way education.

BICULTURAL EDUCATION: A TWO-WAY APPROACH

An overall policy for Kimberley education

The region is populated by Aboriginal people who comprise several language groups (including the western oriented Kriol/English speakers) and non Aboriginal people most of whom are transients. The education system must be flexible and innovative if it is to cater to this diverse population in such a way as to provide all children with the best possible opportunities for productive adulthood. The predominant view of education in traditional communities in our survey always incorporated a statement of the need for what is known throughout the Kimberley traditional Aboriginal community by the Kriol term *tuwei skuling. Tuwei skul or tuwei skuling* can be defined in English as *bicultural education;* or, borrowing the Kriol term, *two-way education.*

If the views of Aboriginal people are heeded and a policy of a bicultural or two-way approach is developed for the region it will be necessary to diversify the methods by which two-way schooling is achieved. This is because of the complexity of circumstances in which the various populations of East Kimberley children find themselves, and the limitations imposed by distance and resources. But, as far as the traditional people are concerned, two-way education is without doubt the way to go. This is the only way in which they feel they will have some control over the personal growth and development of the younger generation, and the way in which today's ideas can lead the community forward in a coherent and stable manner. Traditionally oriented communities want clear recognition of their cultural heritage by the mainstream schools and by the wider society in general. They also recognise the urgency of gaining for all their people an increased proficiency in High English; that is, Standard Australian English. They see proficiency in reading and writing as essential tools for acquiring those further skills which are judged crucial to the communities' gaining some greater measure of control over the direction of their lives. The need for literacy skills and proficiency in spoken English was directly related to communicating and negotiating on equal terms with the Gadiya.

The implications of the trend towards permanent resettlement of previously nomadic people in remote traditional lands are unfolding but slowly, to all those concerned, both Gadiya and Gurrugurru (European and Aboriginal). The best route to the future is not always obvious, but one thing is certain. The attitudes expressed by groups and individuals in this survey indicated a determination not to 'lose' the next generation of children as many of the last were 'lost'.[1] People spoke of the dangers for the young today of 'falling down in between' the two cultures, ill-equipped to cope in either. For this reason traditional people value above all keeping their families together and bringing up their children under their own control. For many traditional Kimberley people personal experiences of the Gadiya and of schools have not always been happy ones.

In many stressed Aboriginal families today, grandmothers and aunts are the mainstay of the family. It is this generation who express fears for the future of the young. Women of this status are often the guardians, formally or informally, of the school-aged young. Their stability and experience are a refuge and support for sons and daughters, the parents of today's school children. Their judgments are valued, and their decisions respected. To many older traditional people, the 'experiment', condoned or otherwise, of giving over their children into the care of Gadiya in boarding places or hostels, has not been a great success. Many of today's young people are themselves returning to communities after mixed or unhappy experiences in high schools and hostels. Young people interviewed in this survey have told us some of the problems which militate against their success in courses undertaken far from home. Old people tell of returnees' lack of respect; a generation gap, and a cultural gap.

These facts go a long way towards explaining the reasons why, in spite of growing awareness and acknowledgement of the need for Western education, there is a determination that this should not be at the expense of the child's education and socialisation into the values and codes of speech and behaviour of his/her own culture. Traditional people do not feel obliged to expose their children to continued negative social experiences at school. They prefer to bring them up in the security of their own families. There is a revitalisation of culture and traditional law in the Kimberleys at present, emanating from the desert, the strongest reservoir of conservative cultural knowledge. At the same time the level of meaningful discussion and negotiation with the wider society is perhaps higher than it has ever been in the region. Aboriginal people of the region are of the view that, as a people, they have a long way to catch up to the European world in the understanding

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1. People spoke of a 'lost generation'; lost to the group and often 'lost' as individuals. The general cultural knowledge of a society is passed on from older to younger people, who in storing this knowledge themselves can pass it on in their turn to future generations. Since the turn of the century in the East Kimberley many people have been lost to the traditional Aboriginal culture in this sense of passing on the cultural heritage. This loss has been through lighter skinned children being taken away from their families, often never to return to share the fruits of their wider knowledge or to gain traditional knowledge. Some have been lost through death (by killing, poisoning, shooting etc,) or sickness, by more or less permanent removal of individuals, (south to foster parents, prisons or institutions, leprosarium etc.) and through loss of hope in life and subsequent destruction through alcohol. Families have been doubly bereft of the productivity of the able young and the security of a foreseeable stable future with the collapse of the old pastoral system notwithstanding its inherent problems, and the massive ravages of alcohol.

and utilisation of its procedures and technology. Their ambition is to understand, utilise and participate. Their intention is to do this slowly, carefully, as a people without further family devastation than has already occurred.

> "Wi garra kamap oligidja, labul, kamap laigidjat, lilbit, lilbit, lilbit, labul la Gadiya."
> *We want to advance all together, as one people, gradually coming up level with the European."*
> (Djungara, approx. 58 yrs, senior community member.)

With the legacy of recent violent destruction of a long and successful social tradition of hunter/gatherer land management, East Kimberley Aboriginal people have been politically and economically powerless as a group to defend their way of life against the onslaught of the acquisitive industrial society which has so outnumbered them. They request help from mainstream educators in teaching mainstream language and technology to their children.

Intercultural communication

Early in this project it became evident that many people felt the need for better understanding between Aborigines and non Aborigines. Question 14 explored this need expressed in many group meetings. At k(a) the question was asked how teachers could learn about the things that Aboriginal people feel are important. Multilingual, bicultural Nagarra, a 39 year old mother and grandmother with grown up children as well as secondary aged and primary school children, from an isolated desert community, made the following impassioned answer:

> "Well they garra djidan an prepared to learn. *(They must sit down and be prepared to learn).* How come we prepared to sit down and learn about their ways and culture, from lil kid right up to y'know .....? Watrong they kaan kamdan *(Why can't they come down....)* to our level too; learn; sidan an learn these things, learn about our way of life.... Why couldn't they come down, bend you know, both ways. Or are they too superior? Health sister ought to be learning about our traditions and ways; and the teacher should be learning about customs and language and the way people live. Teacher should go down and look at the situation; where that kid come from, y'know, what type of lifestyle the kid is ... living.
>
> "It's got to be both ways, cooperation, you know."
> T401213

They suggest that the first essential is for educators to get together with Aboriginal parents and begin to form a new basis of trust, obligation and cooperation. They want to feel that the non-Aboriginal contributors to their children's schooling are reinforcing home values, that is respect for parents, the elderly and the Aboriginal culture, rather than pulling their children's allegiances away from them.

Acceptance of this responsibility by the Education Department means accepting the need for teachers to become informed about the cultural differences, way of life, problems and aspirations of the Aboriginal people of the region today. Schools of the region must adopt a policy which reflects the cultural milieu of the region. This means recognising that they are teaching to a multicultural student population, and teaching accordingly.

It will mean a two-way approach in town schools in which teaching about the region, its people, their problems and their potential is an integral part of the primary and the secondary programme. The specific ways in which to incorporate such teaching should be worked out in each school with the guidance and strong involvement of local communities. In this way diverse programmes will come into effect, according to the local wish and the local language.

In every community there is a concern that children mix with the mainstream non-Aboriginal people of the region, the expectation being that they will learn to participate in the wider culture. There is however a strong awareness that to learn properly the child must be happy; that he has a right to take pride in his own language and cultural heritage. From this beginning he must progress at school to a knowledge of the wider world.

Location of Existing Two-way Schools

Primary

In the towns of Wyndham, Halls Creek and Kununurra both traditional and non-traditional townspeople told us that Government primary and secondary schools did little or nothing to acknowledge Aboriginal culture. Similarly this perception, together with the high rate of staff turnover, was the major deciding factor in a community decision, heavily debated, to accept the Catholic Church proposal to take over responsibility for the school at Balgo in early 1984.

Two-way primary schools already exist also in the communities of Turkey Creek and Yiyili (where a three-way language program has been in place up to this year).

High Schools

Until 1984/5 there has been no real provision in existing two-way schools for secondary aged students. Now, however, both at Balgo and at Turkey Creek, as well as Yiyili, some secondary students are being catered for. At Christmas Creek (Krungal) in 1984 the first secondary community school commenced operation as a two-way school.

Community schools

The larger East Kimberley communities then as well as Yiyili, are pioneering this approach in the region. Wangkajungka Community at Christmas Creek, under difficult circumstances and without the infrastructure of a large church group or the State Education Department, is attempting to provide an independent two-way secondary education on site with the aim of providing some degree of community control over the staffing, structure and curriculum. This is yet another example of a community which has been unable to achieve some community control of education in the State government education system. This same community has been lobbying for some time - unsuccessfully - for a preschool to be situated in the community proper, with the same educational goals - competent biculturalism. Respondents here feel that total community involvement is an essential part of community development.

This community wants to see a language programme and reinforcement of family and traditional values of manners, customs and respect in place in the schools which their children attend. In addition they want an introduction for their children to the language, manners, customs and traditions of the mainstream society, and academically oriented, work-integrated secondary programmes for their secondary students, many of whom have a history of interrupted schooling. This then constitutes a two-way or bicultural programme, so far unachievable through the government school system.

There is a strong awareness among young educated adults of their ambivalent position in relation to the old and senior community members to whom they defer, and the various Gadiya in positions of management and services relating to the community. The need to gain management and related skills essential to the successful future management of the settlement is acknowledged.

The means to achieve it are suggested by all communities in the region: on site work integrated education opportunities, with the incentive of work and recreation opportunities within the region, and within the communities.

The problems of many communities can be exemplified in Wangkajungka Community. Fortunate in the continuity and the capability of teaching staff at the nearby government primary school (though not in its situation) this community is however hampered by Government policy in influencing the degree of community participation in language programmes and traditional teaching in the primary school. Perhaps the diffidence of senior people, largely unskilled in western technological accomplishments, unpractised in the technical jargon of the Education Department and indeed the manipulation of the English language has also contributed to the breakdown in communication between this Department and traditional people. In spite of this, a strong desire to hold together and maintain their cultural integrity has led to community attempts to achieve their aims through independent schools.

Freedom from departmental regulation as to curriculum, staffing and structure of schools are advantages in choosing an independent school. However, attracting and holding staff, developing appropriate language and other curricula - both traditional and mainstream - as well as other administration, distance and organisation factors, remain as major obstacles. They are holding up the attainment of educational goals, not because of rigid and inappropriate policies, but because of lack of any properly developed infrastructure.

In communities such as Wangkajungka there is potential for the development of innovative and viable bicultural programmes in which traditional knowledge could be put to the use of the young not only in "guiding them from the known to the unknown" but in allowing the community itself to be at the forefront of documenting the historical, social, geographical and biological nature of the region. People in the community are eager to do this.

TABLE 14: SOME COMMUNITIES OR GROUPS IN WHICH A PREFERENCE FOR TWO-WAY EDUCATION OF PRIMARY CHILDREN ON SITE WAS INDICATED

Group	Dominant Language(as)	Already tried to ask Govt about this
Balgo Homestead	Djaru/Kriol	YES
Bow River	Kija/Kriol	"
Bungle Bungle	Kija/Kriol	"
Kambaramba	Miriwung/Kriol	"
Lunja	Djaru/Kriol	"
Kunji	Djaru/Kriol	"
Malan	Walmajarri/Kriol	"
Maralam	Muriny-Patha/Kriol	"
Nicholson	Gurindji/Kriol	"
Ringer's Soak	Djaru	"
Yagga Yagga	Kukatja	Approached Catholics

Many interviewees called for a two-way approach. At Malan, for example, some 350 kilometres from Hall's Creek and 40 kilometres from Balgo, I was told by a senior council member:

> "Actually we set this school up for try and train all the kids for Walmadjarri especially; we asked the Government before, this school here."
>
> T402020

Today the beginnings of a language programme are emerging under the auspices of the Catholic education system.

SUMMARY

For outlying communities and smaller outstation groups in the region engaged in the processes of establishing viable permanent settlements, a two-way or bicultural/ bilingual approach is considered essential. All such groups with whom I spoke emphasised the logic of a two-way approach to the education of their children today in the following way. It would

(a) involve members of their own community in the education of the community's own children. This would not only enhance the knowledge and experience of adult community amembers but also provide models for the young in this period of social change. Most communities have a pool of young people with some degree of western education whom they consider eligible for such work;

(b) help provide children with a confident grasp of their own background and identity and the values of their community; and

(c) give them a firm basis on which to build further knowledge.

In towns, a diversified approach based on the two-way community philosophy was seen by respondents to be appropriate to the region as a whole. They see two-way education as being the most appropriate and viable strategy to improve the quality and effectiveness of education for children in outlying communities, likewise for some children in the towns.

Two-way education as proposed by community people for outlying isolated settlements, - that is, with greater emphasis on the use of traditional culture and language - cannot, town respondents feel, be realised in the towns in the same way. Here the majority of Aboriginal families are more western oriented, and are Kriol or bidialectal Kriol/English speakers, and a greater proportion of the school population is non Aboriginal and monolingual in Standard Australian English. Townspeople nevertheless are in strong agreement with the ideals and philosophy of the two-way education proposals advanced by community people. This was clearly indicated by responses to questions 14, 15 and 16 of the interviews, and in group discussions.

In the town schools then, while townspeople want to see the emphasis remain on the teaching of mainstream language curriculum and skills they stressed the real need, at the same time, for not only a recognition by the Department of Education but an increased awareness among teachers of the bicultural nature of the region, including the towns. A change of approach is necessary to increase the effectiveness of the teaching.

A number of strategies to bring this about were advocated. Many of them are applications of the two-way education philosophy to the town situation. Perhaps the most crucial issue in the two-way education philosophy is the vehicle of culture transmission - language.

CHAPTER 8: LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

LANGUAGE - COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential in education. All teaching relies on the ability of pupil and teacher to understand each other and to convey thoughts and meanings to each other effectively. In East Kimberley towns this ideal is often not achieved, and in communities and outstations where the language and cultural backgrounds of the teachers and the students differ radically the problem is even more acute.

Within the region a number of traditional Aboriginal languages are still in everyday use, yet the Education Department in Western Australia to date has had no widespread program of bilingual education. Recommendations of the recent Beazley Inquiry into Education indicate a commitment to improve communication between the students and their non-Aboriginal teachers through more enlightened language policies and the development and use of appropriate programmes.

Recommendation 219 states at (ii) and (v) that policies "should give due regard to":

> (ii) the encouragement of bilingual education, by offering Aboriginal languages in schools, by using Aboriginal languages as a teaching medium in conjunction with English and by teaching English as a second language to students whose first language is Aboriginal or a Kriol;
>
> (v) the involvement of linguists in the co-ordination and development of education for Aboriginal students.
>
> From: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Education in Western Australia, Perth, 1984.

In view of this, the information gathered in this project is crucial for a proper understanding of the language background of East Kimberley people and their children, and is an indicator of the directions East Kimberley Aboriginal Education might take with regard to language and literacy.

Any perceptive visitor to the East Kimberley region notices that varieties of language other than standard and colloquial Australian English are to be heard on the streets, in the shops, parks and playgrounds of the towns. Visitors venturing further from the bitumen on to stations or being invited to Aboriginal communities will hear these same varieties and perhaps yet other unfamiliar languages. These language varieties are the standard everyday communication media of the Aboriginal population - the largest proportion of the permanent population of the region. Yet teachers usually know only English and largely come from cities as short-term visitors. How then might equal opportunities in education be provided for the people of the region?

Early in this research it became clear that language and language-related matters were one of the main concerns of the Aboriginal people of the area.

Major Language Goals

The strong message came through from all communities and groups with whom we spoke that acquiring competence in Standard Australian English must be given high priority.

Of either equal or next priority was the stated desire of:

(a) tradition-oriented people for their children to maintain languages they now speak, and for the schools to assist in this, and of

(b) western-oriented people for their children to be taught about local languages and culture by persons competent to do so, namely traditional people.

This should be done through the school but not necessarily at the school.

The Setting

As indicated previously, there are now three towns in the region servicing five large communities and settlements as well as numerous smaller settlements and outstations. It is in these settlements and outstations that the more traditional-oriented part of the Kimberley population is located, and it is here that traditional Aboriginal languages are very much part of daily life.

The towns are more cosmopolitan. Here several tribal or language groups are represented. While some sections of the Aboriginal population are no longer in command of their traditional tribal language, fringe camps and settlements are the town centres of language and tradition. A few tradition-oriented families may also live in houses in the town proper. Evidence of strong interest in the maintenance of language and cultural values is apparent in the outstation movement. There does not appear to be any sign of major permanent movement back to the towns. They are service and recreation centres, but home for many East Kimberley people is more and more becoming the larger communities - potential small towns - of Balgo, Turkey Creek, Christmas Creek, Oombulgurri and Kalumburu, or the smaller settlements like Ringer's Soak, Malan and Billiluna which have grown either from the development of outstations or pastoral leases or other arrangements.

MULTILINGUALISM

Figure 5 reveals that the Aboriginal population of the East Kimberley is a multilingual one - a fact clearly known to Aboriginal people in the area and accepted without thought as normal.[1] The lists of languages of the East Kimberley which follow in Tables 15 and 16 are included to inform readers of the linguistically rich background of the population. Many of these languages are now spoken by diminishing numbers of elderly speakers; others are spoken by larger groups which include the young. The information is by courtesy of W. McGregor of the Kimberley Language Resource Centre from the preliminary draft of the "Handbook of Kimberley

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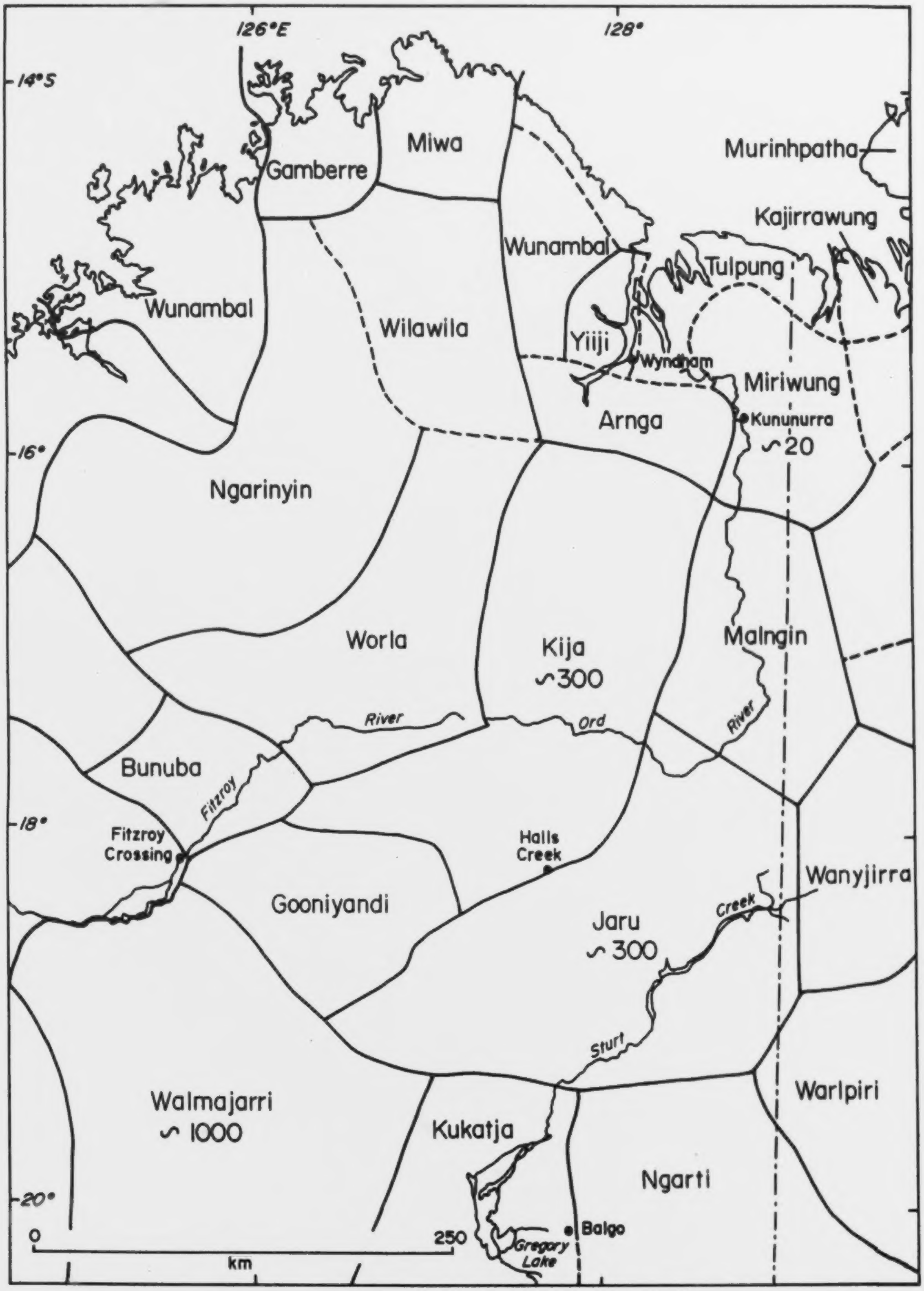
1. The precise location of boundaries in Tindale's 1974 map may need amendment.

Figure 4: Traditional language localities of the East Kimberley Region



Boundaries after N. B. Tindale, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, University of California Press, 1974; (in need of revision).

Orthography according to W. McGregor, "Recommended Spelling of Kimberley Aboriginal Language Names", Kimberley Language Resource Centre, 1986.

Estimated number of speakers after McGregor, "Handbook of Kimberley Languages", preliminary version, 1986.

TABLE 15: TRADITIONAL LANGUAGES OF THE EAST KIMBERLEY REGION TODAY (from: Handbook of Kimberley Languages, preliminary version 1985 Compiled by W. McGregor Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Broome)

LANGUAGE FAMILY	LANGUAGES	LOCATION	APPROX. NUMBER OF SPEAKERS TODAY
Bunuban	Gooniyandi	W. Kimberley, Yiyili, Hall's Ck, Kununurra	100
Worrorran	Gamberre	Kalumburu, Wyndham	6
	Gwini	Kalumburu, Wyndham	50
	Wunambal	Mowanjum (W Kimberley) Kalumburu	200 (inc. 2nd lang. speakers)
	Worla	Wyndham, Fork Ck, Oombulgurri	Up to 500 (1960)
	Yiiji		
Jarrakan	Kajirrawung	Kununurra	Some
	Kija, Lungka	Hall's Ck - Kununurra	300 (1971)
	Miriwung	Kununurra and nearby	20
Jaminjung	Jaminjung	Turkey Ck, Pt Keats (NT), Kununurra	30
Murrinh-patha	Murrinh-patha	Kununurra	Handful (1000 in Pt Keats)
Pama-Nyungan	Jaru	Hall's Ck, Lamboo, Moolabulla almost to Billiluna, Gordon Downs, Nicholson, Valley	250
	Nyininy	Nicholson, Gordon Downs, Mistake Ck.	50
	Wanyjirra	Between upper Baines and Ord Rivers	50 (approx. at Wave Hill)
	Kukatja	Balgo, Billiluna, Sturt Ck, Papunya	380 (approx.)
	Malngin	Upper Ord	30
	Ngarti	Balgo, Gordon Downs, Billiluna, Lake Gregory, Yuendumu, Lajamanu, traditionally Balgo - Gordon Downs.	20-30 +
	Walmajarri	Fitzroy Crossing, Looma (W. Kimberley) and E. Kimberleys, traditionally Great Sandy Desert.	1000 (approx.)
	Wangkajunga	Fitzroy Crossing, Bayulu (W. Kimberley), Christmas Creek.	?

TABLE 16: LIST OF MAIN LANGUAGES IN USE IN THE LOCALITIES VISITED IN THIS SURVEY

LOCALITY	LANGUAGES IN DAILY USE
Oombulgurri	Kriol
Wyndham	Kriol, Mirriwung, Kija, English
Kalumburu	English, traditional language only in use by very old people, Kriol
Kununurra - includes Mirima, and other communities and camps	Mirriwung, Jaminjung, Kajirrawung, Kija, Murrinh-patha, Kriol, English
Maralam	Murrinh -patha
Bow River	Mirriwung, Kija, Kriol
Turkey Creek	Kija, Kriol
Hall's Creek - includes Yardgee, Red Hill and other groups	Jaru, Kija*, Gooniyandi Walmajarri, Kukatja, Kriol, English
Ringer's Soak	Jaru, Ngarti, Kriol
Billiluna	Walmajarri, Kriol
Balgo	Kukatja, Warlpiri, Jaru, Ngarti, Walmajarri, Pintupi, Kriol, English
Yagga Yagga	Kukatja
Malan	Walmajarri, Kukatja, Kriol, English
Krungal, Christmas Creek	Wangkajunga, Walmajarri, Kriol
Yiyili	Gooniyandi, Kriol

* Kija and Gooniyandi (Kuniyanti) are spoken by some residents in Hall's Creek but are not in common daily use by appreciable numbers of people.

NOTE: Standard English may be spoken by some persons at locations above where I have not listed it. This is because it is not in common everyday use among community members.

Other languages may be spoken by some persons at locations above. Where I have not listed them this is because I have not heard them or been given first-hand information about them from the fieldwork for this report.

While both Tables 15 and 16 use McGregor's recommended spelling of language names, spelling may differ from this in the text. See note page xii.

Languages", volume 1, Preliminary version, September 1985. The languages are arranged in language families, which have been ordered (approximately) according to location from north to south. Figures for number of speakers of each language are not all current and therefore may not be an accurate indication of today's scene.

The extent of this contemporary multilingualism is however not widely known or recognised by the wider society. Nor is a background of multilingualism taken into account or made use of in the schools in the region.

We tend to regard English as the national language and the mother tongue of every Australian - other than migrants or children of recently arrived migrants. Another look at Figure 5 will show that there are some places in the East Kimberley where Standard English is not listed at all. Standard Australian English is, in fact, not a language used in some East Kimberley communities. In 28 of the 38 groups contacted in group meetings, although English speakers may be included in their number, Standard Australian English is rarely used in everyday social interaction among group members. For many its only use is in talking to visiting southerners - both non-Aboriginal and Nyungar[1] - and resident non-Aboriginal people with whom it is judged sociolinguistically inappropriate to speak Kriol[2] or traditional language, and then of course only by those community members who are in command of Standard Australian English.

It was outside the parameters of this study to seek to count absolute numbers of speakers of Standard Australian English or traditional languages.[3] However, the above facts have emerged from our work in this study in 1984 and 1985, and work undertaken in the course of research, as yet unpublished, between 1981 and 1983 in the south and west of the East Kimberley by K. Thies.[4]

Of the other ten Aboriginal groups in the total 38 listed in Appendix A, and contacted in this survey, seven are groups in which the major language variety used by most of the Aboriginal population most of the time is Kimberley Creole (Kriol), but in which some people sometimes use Standard Australian English and some people sometimes use a traditional Aboriginal language. The other groups (Kalumburu, Oombulgurri and Bethel Sanctuary) are groups for which we were able to obtain enough data on which to base only a brief statement on language usage. In all these places, however, we found the creole of the Kimberleys to be in use.

'LOST LANGUAGE'

If an East Kimberley Aboriginal person says he has 'lost his language' an outsider might assume that this speaker's language attitudes and competence are similar to those of Standard Australian English speaking non-Aboriginal townspeople. This would be almost certainly an incorrect assumption. East Kimberley people who cannot speak the traditional language of their ancestors are likely to have some degree of receptive competence in it, or may know and use a number of words and expressions from it and/or the local traditional language. Many traditional language words have indeed become part of the lexicon of Kimberley Creole (Kriol) in which such speakers are fluent.

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[1] South Western Australian Aboriginal people.

[2] See footnote p. 105.

[3] For more detailed information on traditional languages, see Kimberley Language Resource Centre report, 1984.

[4] Field material, K. Thies, 1981-83. East Kimberley region.

This way of describing one's status as having lost one's traditional language is indicative of an awareness among Kimberley people not only of language but the cultural implications that go with it. It is clear that this is as much a description of the feeling of loss as the fact of incompetence. It should not be taken at face value by a European as an adequate description of the language competency of the speaker. He or she is very likely to possess a repertoire which includes some knowledge of the traditional language and fluency in Kimberley Creole as well as a knowledge of Standard Australian English.

Thirty-six year old mother R.C., Kimberley English speaker and experienced government employee of some 15 years standing, of an East Kimberley town, discussed her language use in childhood:

R.C.: "Well I talked my own language, then when I tried talking to white people, I'd go into Kriol"

Interviewer: "Where did you learn Standard English?"

R.C.: "White people, when we used to go out on the station."

T313500

By far the most common reasons given by East Kimberley people for loss of traditional language are having been separated from one's family at a very young age and placed in an institution for many years, or being the child of parents who have been institutionalised.

In such institutions children sometimes remained for up to twelve years without seeing their families at all, or were permitted home only once a year at Christmas. Some parents with a desire for their children to acquire literacy in English and a knowledge of European ways placed their children in missions or mission schools with misgivings but voluntarily. More often, however, children were collected and taken away by welfare or police, often without prior consultation with parents and without real consent being given. With no alternative offered to them, many parents chose to hide their children or hasten to leave their settlement or camp and take to the bush when word got around that welfare officials or police were coming. Either way, placed there voluntarily or not, children who were brought up in mission hostels, found contact with their families, their culture and their traditional language severely curtailed. Some lost contact entirely. For many, however, through the perseverance of traditional kinship ties, strong feelings of identity have remained. Because acceptable western education opportunities were not available for many tradition-oriented dark skinned children in the early years, traditional languages have remained strong in some areas.

CREOLE

Language use is a central and dynamic issue in the East Kimberley with regard to both education and rapid social change. It is therefore essential at this point to define and briefly discuss pidgin and creole languages. Acknowledgement and some understanding of these language varieties is crucial to the development of adequate educational strategies in the region (and indeed lack of understanding to date accounts for a lot of education problems).

General Definitions: Pidgin and Creole Languages

Pidgin and Creole languages are characteristic of situations of frontier contact between peoples of different languages and cultures. If contact between groups is such that one group dominates the others, that is they are on an unequal social footing, or contact is restricted (for example, as often occurs in situations of colonisation or military domination of indigenous groups) then the less powerful groups often attempt - indeed need to attempt as a survival technique - to learn the language of the dominant group.

In circumstances where there is minimal social interaction between the two groups there may be restricted opportunities for adequate learning. In such situations, in many parts of the world - and the Kimberley region is one - a restricted, simplified form of communication develops. The mother tongue of no-one, such a form of language is used primarily as a means of communication in encounters between the less powerful groups and the dominant group. Neither group uses it for communication in the private or domestic spheres. This restricted form of language is known as a *pidgin.*

Creole languages, on the other hand, arise from pidgin languages if and when the children of pidgin speaking adults begin to use the pidgin in early childhood as a mother tongue.[1] Such is the situation in the East Kimberley.

Comparison of Pidgin and Creole.

Creoles are characterised by an expansion of grammar and vocabulary. While a pidgin is a language of convenience with strictly limited functional possibilities, a creole is the native language of its speakers, and as such becomes capable of the expression of a much greater range of ideas, meanings and subtleties. Creole, like any other language, is capable of transmitting all the necessary cultural information and social and emotional communicative needs of its speakers.

Creole in the East Kimberley

Aboriginal people today who have been born and brought up in the East Kimberley or surrounding areas, know and use in their day-to-day lives a variety of language different from that spoken by the majority of English speaking Australians. This is Kimberley Creole, or Kimberley Kriol.

'Kriol' is simply the Kriol way of spelling 'Creole', and has become established as the name of the creole spoken at Roper River (and used for some years in the bilingual school there). Linguist J. Sandefur maintains that the name 'Kriol' should be applied as an overall term for northern Australian creole language varieties. In this report the term is used in this general sense.

---

[1] Estimates of the number of speakers of different creole languages in the world today are in the vicinity of more than 6,000,000 (De Camp 1971:17).

I refer to *creole* when discussing this variety of language in a generic sense; I will refer to *Kimberley Creole (or Kimberley Kriol)* in reference to the creole spoken throughout the Kimberley, from Broome to Kununurra and north and south of those locations for some hundreds of kilometres. The term Kimberley Creole as I use it includes the recently described Fitzroy Valley Kriol (Hudson, 1983). At this stage of knowledge then I have chosen to use the term 'Kriol' to encompass both the Kimberley Creole and that described by Sandefur from Roper River as Kriol; Sandefur (1979) concludes that the two are mutually intelligible - indeed varieties of one language.[1] The term 'Kimberley English' I will use to refer to the distinct accented variety of Australian English spoken in the Kimberley Region.

Within the creole language of the East Kimberley I would like to distinguish, using the Aboriginal community's terminology, a 'heavy' way of talking and a 'light' way of talking. The 'heavy' way of talking I have designated as 'heavy creole'. This is a variety so different from city Australian English that it is, linguistically speaking, a distinct language. The 'light' way of talking I will call 'light creole' to distinguish it from Kimberley English, a lightly accented Standard Australian English. (The detail of relationships between these varieties will be discussed further in K. Thies' sociolinguistic study of Creole in the East Kimberley - thesis in progress.)

Standard Australian English (abbreviated sometimes as SAE) is taken in this report to be the everyday language spoken in more or less formal situations by city people (such as spoken by the research workers). This variety of English is known by Aboriginal people in the region as High English. It is spoken in the region by non-Aboriginal people and some Aboriginal people in schools, offices, hospitals, service organisations, and so on. It is spoken by non-Aboriginal people in meetings with Aboriginal people.

The research data which follow indicate that while most Aboriginal people in the region today are to some degree familiar with this speech variety, few claim to speak it themselves. Many see language as a big problem to be resolved; what place should English and Kriol have in schools?

It appears that most East Kimberley Aboriginal people have a limited degree of competence in 'High' or Standard Australian English, while most non-Aboriginal Australians have an even more limited competence in Kriol.

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[1] While regional variants differ but are reportedly mutually intelligible, further investigation is needed to clarify the relationships between them and their degree of mutual intelligibility. The creole spoken in the East Kimberley is the subject of research in progress by K. Thies. In the meantime I will, as stated above, use the term Kriol in a general sense as applying to the varieties of North Australian creole including the Kimberley Creole. The word *creole* (small 'c') is used as a descriptive adjective (e.g. as in *'ancient language'*, *'hispanic language'*, or *'creole language'*).

Many people, whether from traditional backgrounds or not, who have completed a western style education and/or who have lived in a Standard English speaking environment for some time, are Standard English speakers. Few East Kimberley people come into this category.

VIEWPOINTS ON LANGUAGE USE IN THE REGION - THE DATA

Creole and Bilingualism

During the first round of community meetings many groups discussed the Kimberley Creole and its implications for education. The emergence of this language as an 'entity' which is recognised by linguists and by increasing numbers of non-specialists and non-native speakers is very recent (native speakers have long recognised its existence but not the extent of its difference from Standard Australian English). Indeed the number of people other than its speakers who are aware of the nature, uses, ubiquity and expressiveness of this form of language are, for a variety of reasons, very few. It is time this ignorance was corrected.

In the interview guide used in the second round of individual interviews the following statement was made. The statement identifies this language, using the nomenclature of the region, as it was described to us in the first round of group meetings:

> "People have told us about Pidgin English or Kriol (Creole). Some people have called this way of talking Camp English or New English. People might talk heavy or light Kriol."

We then asked the questions (a) to (k) of Question 10 (see Table 17) often receiving a wealth of additional information. Question 10(a) asks:

> 'Do you know this way of talking?'

Of a total of 72 people to whom this question was put, 68 responded "Yes". Three of those who responded "No" were not from the area, and later qualified their answers anyway, discussing the creole as "Broken English" and the fourth, a local person, did not respond to the terms used in the statement, but in answer to Question 10(f) indicated her awareness of this language variety when she said her parents spoke to older relations in 'Half-an'-half'. I have included her answer as positive. Thus, where N = 72,

Total interviewees who know the pidgin/
Kriol way of speech = 72 or 95.8%

While our sample might be challenged by statistical purists, our experience indicates that almost the total Aboriginal population of the region is familiar with Kriol. Though some may be familiar with the terms 'Creole' or 'Kriol', many people are not and may know it by a variety of other terms, including those used above.

Having established that this way of talking is well known not only to older, more traditional people but to the whole population, we wanted to gather more precise information about the language background of the people whose viewpoints constitute this report, so that the full impact of their concerns might be made clear. We also wanted to gain a more precise picture of language usage in the region today.

Question 10(a) together with Questions 11 and 12 established that people from all walks of life - virtually everybody in the region - is familiar with the Creole way of talking. Question 10(b) elicited information from people as to which language they learned first of all as a small child, that is, what is their mother tongue, or first language.

10(b) When you were a little child, what did
you first learn to talk?
(Tick which one(s)).

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE	PIDGIN/CREOLE	ENGLISH

We were able to qualify this information further by asking what languages people spoke now, and by gathering information about the language background of their family with Questions 10(d) to 10(i).

The following table shows the results of question 10(b) where N=73. The ages of the respondents ranged from 16 to 40+.

TABLE 17: FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNED AS A CHILD

FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNED AS A CHILD						
Traditional	Kriol	English	Tradit/ Kriol	Tradit/ English	English/ Kriol	Tradit/ Kriol/ English
17	22	11	19	1	2	1

If one excludes from the total 73 interviewees six who, although resident now in the East Kimberley were not born in the region and did not grow up there, one is left with the figure of five people out of a total of 67 who list English only as their first language. That is only 7.5 per cent East Kimberley born interviewees listed English as their mother tongue. If one adds to this number those people identifying as bi- or tri-lingual in combinations of traditional language, Kriol and English, the total is then 13.4 per cent.

The following figures also indicate the varied language experience of our East Kimberley sample:

Bilingual from childhood in a traditional language and Kriol	30%
First language Kriol speakers	66%
First language a traditional language	25%
Total per centage first language other than Standard Australian English	86.5%

Standard Australian English

The data indicated that only 13 in every 100 East Kimberley Aboriginal respondents are first-language Standard Australian English speakers. Yet Standard Australian English is recognised by all the people we interviewed as being a crucial tool needed for participation in education 'Gadiya way', that is Australian mainstream education. Respondents noted its necessity in official dealings with Standard Australian English speakers who do not speak either the traditional language or Kriol and have no comprehension of the concepts of either, but who hold positions of authority or are messengers for those in authority in the cities; and in social dealings with Standard Australian English speakers.

Question 10(j) yielded a lot of comment and showed, in conjuction with Question 16(d), that while specific communities placed different values on the three language varieties, people saw a place for each in the region. They valued most highly traditional languages and English. The Kriol of the region was acknowledged as the language of the Aboriginal people as a whole.

A thirty-two year old woman from a community of some three hundred persons describing speech use in the community said:

> "Well mostly all the kids here now don't talk Wangkajungka, they mostly talk Walmajarri; they're just learning ... when they grow a bit older they'll pick up Wangkajungka ... Mostly I don't hear them talk Wangkajungka here, they talk Walmajarri."

Interviewer "and when the kids are at home, or playing in the playground, what would you say they're mostly talking?"

> "Mix; Walmajarri and Kriol all the kids are talking round here."

Interviewer: "What's the most natural way for the kids?"

> "Mm, Pidgin English ..."
>
> KT141336

S.T., a 44 year old town shire employee who is also involved in providing health education in the East Kimberley, described the difficulties facing both Standard English speakers and local people when official documents and letters need to be understood and responded to by a group. At meetings, he said,

> "I explain it in Kriol so they fully understand what that this thing means by the time I leave them, y'know ... I read the letter to them [to the] end of the paragraph. "Do you understand that?" Some'll look at me; some'll say yes they think they do and others just don't understand a damn thing. So I say right, I'll explain it to you. And I do it. In Pidgin, or Kriol."
>
> KT21114

C.D., a 25 year old Youth Education employee in an East Kimberley town, described the Kimberley Creole:

> "I don't know what "Kriol" is - well people speak Pidgin English all the time"
>
> KT71060

and later, C.D. explained:

> "It's like a um national dialect .....if the Reserve kids talk in [traditional] language, the town kids wouldn't know [what they're talking about]."

Interviewer: "What if they're talking in (Kriol)?"

> "They'll understand each other, whereas the white person wouldn't."

O.D., a young man in his thirties, educated for many years in Perth and now returned to take up a position in his home town:

> "English? Um we've always sort of spoken in Pidgin English at home ... instead of saying I'm going down to the creek to play, I'd turn around and say "mibala gowindan [la] crik to plei garra djangayi; djudimbat bird." Kriol; yep, it's just the casual, relaxed way of communicating between Aboriginal people, Kriol!"
>
> T331461

B.C., 36 year old mother of seven children, mission educated, said:

> "Well, there's a lot of Kriol spoken at the moment in this town! But um not too many can speak traditional language. Only a few in the half-caste families would speak Standard English ....."
>
> T371500

People commented that it wasn't a question of 'needing to know' Kriol [see Q10(j)] - everybody did in any case.

K.G., 39 year old mother of primary, high school and tertiary students, answering Question 10(j):

> "Well you can't stop them from learning Kriol, can you! That's one thing. So y'know, in the end it'll eventually take over I'd say. There won't be any more traditional language left all over the area.
>
> "I'd like them to learn proper English, so they can involve paperwork and things like that. With the young kids, I speak to them in English, but at the school they pick up Kriol

> a lot now. Like when [my son] was talking to me this afternoon he was talking in a bit of Kriol ... most 'the time I speak to him in English and he'll say "Whaat? Wat tharran!" and I say "don't say that, say what is it?" I mean it's very hard for them not to speak it ..."

Q.C., 35 years of age, town mother:

> "Our kids should learn their own [traditional] language. With Aboriginal people Kriol just automatically comes in; it just depends on who they're talking to at the time. I can't see the big arguments about Kriol - who should learn Kriol and why Kriol should be learned; Kriol is automatically in Aboriginal people; that's their English ..."

Interviewer: "Who talks it?"

"Kriol? Everybody; any Aboriginal people."

Interviewer: "Down south?"

"... no, no, they got no Kriol."

Language usage in the various communities as shown by responses to Question 10 of our study indicates the need for a serious rethink on the applicability of current methods used for teaching English in the East Kimberley.

IMPLICATIONS OF LACK OF STANDARD AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH BACKGROUND

Question 13 of our interview guide asks the interviewees to focus directly on the school language situation, bearing on their own experience or the experiences of their children, and to give their considered opinion as to the general degree of comprehension in each instance cited. Respondents were asked not to think only of themselves or their child in answering this question, but to generalise in relation to their particular community.

Relating only to language and not to cultural or other problems, the following statement prefaced Question 13:

> **"Many people have told us that sometimes there are problems in the East Kimberley because different people do not properly understand each other. Which of these statements would you say is true of this community?"**

Question 13 then followed, consisting of five statements about the level of understanding of spoken language between children, parents and teachers. Respondents were asked to mark one of the five qualifying expressions as true: *always*, *nearly always*, *sometimes*, *not much*, *never*. Figure 6 is typical of many responses.

Figure 5: A typical response to question 13

Many people have told us that sometimes there are problems in the East Kimberley because different people do not properly understand each other. Which of these statements would you say is true of this community?

The gardiya teacher understand when a kid talks to him.

| Always | Nearly always [✓ | Sometimes] | Not much | Never |

A kid understands when a gardiya teacher talks to him

| Always | Nearly always [✓ | Sometimes] | Not much | Never |

A teacher understands when 4 or 5 kids are talking in a group

| Always | Nearly always | Sometimes [✓ | Not much] | Never |

Parents and teachers understand each other properly when they talk together

| Always | Nearly always [✓ | Sometimes] | Not much | Never |

Old people understand white people's way of talking

| Always | Nearly always | Sometimes [✓ | Not much] | Never |

Why?

Results indicate that most people feel there is considerably less than optimum understanding between teachers and children, and little understanding of the non-Aboriginal person's Standard English by older people who are often the guardians of children at school.

In analysing Question 13 I have taken an answer of *always* or *nearly always* to indicate an *adequate* degree of understanding, and an answer of *sometimes*, *not much* or *never* to indicate an *inadequate* degree of understanding. Results of Question 13 present an alarming picture.

STATEMENTS 1 AND 2

1. The Gadiya teacher understands when a kid talks to him.

2. A kid understands when a Gadiya teacher talks to him.

When a child talks to a European teacher, 69 per cent of the respondents felt that the teacher does not always or even nearly always understand the child's meaning properly.

During verbal exchanges between teachers and children it is assumed that both parties are making an effort to convey their thoughts and meanings. The child is probably using his knowledge of the teacher's language and style of speaking to the best of his ability. Nevertheless, in the East Kimberley less than one-third of the people with whom I spoke felt that children or teachers always understand each other when they speak to each other

The third statement of Question 13 said:

STATEMENT 3

3. A teacher understands when four or five children are talking in a group.

Only 14 per cent of interviewees felt that teachers would understand all or most of what was being said. In other words, when a group of students are in discussion among themselves, with the teacher within earshot and listening but not directly involved, 86 per cent of respondents felt that teachers would understand little or nothing.

Twenty-seven per cent of the community/fringe/outstation respondents and seven per cent of town respondents chose the positive *'always/nearly always'* response. Curiously all but one *always* response on statements 1, 2, 3 and 5 were speakers from communities where both a heavy Kriol/ Pidgin and traditional languages are spoken. Perhaps their perceptions of the degree of understanding were in comparison with the speaking of traditional languages in the presence of Europeans - when comprehension would usually be nil.

A breakdown of the negative responses (86 per cent of all responses) according to the type of community from which respondents came is shown in the following table.

TABLE 18: BREAKDOWN OF NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO STATEMENT 3: A teacher understand when 4 or 5 kids are talking in a group.

LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	RESPONSE CATEGORY CHOSEN	
		'Sometimes'	'Not much, Never
Townspeople	100% = 25	64% (16)	36% (9)
Fringe, community and outstation people	100% = 24	25% (6)	75% (18)

Total negative responses N = 49.

Discussion

Suggestions as to why this state of affairs occurs varied through the region, many people qualifying their answers with explanations and a great deal of thought. The major problems were said to be with children in the lower grades and/or with children coming to school for the first time. Also, respondents observed, the more frequently the child attends school the less are his language problems. With new teachers it was felt that after a year or two most teachers had a fair understanding of what the students were saying.

S.T., forty-four, of Kununurra said:

> "Teachers who have stayed longer in this area understand; new teachers should have a training period in the Kimberley."
>
> T21166

and in relation to statement 5 of Q13:

> "Most white people do not take the time to speak Kriol and explain to the old people."

N.A., sixty-one year old Djaru/Kriol/English speaking grandmother with many years interest and experience in education problems both on the home front and within the school, said:

> "In the first year the teacher's doing here he might find it bit hard ... but in the second or third year they'll really understand them."
>
> T322506

The problem she said is worse when the children are small.

O.D., thirty-four, a second generation Kriol speaker and Standard Australian English speaker, was educated in the East Kimberley and later in Perth. His job in education now involves supervision of children of various ages. After some deliberation he chose to make the following statement at Question 13:

> "The Gadiya teacher *nearly always* understands when a kid talks to him."

But qualifying this he then said:

> "I'm more inclined to put a circle in between *nearly always* and *sometimes*. It's not a full, clear-cut communication between teachers and kids. Kids nearly always have difficulty in understanding. A lot of teachers aren't trained in communicating with Aboriginal kids. After they've been around for a while, teachers learn to pick up what the kids are saying.'
>
> T331191

Picking up what the kids are saying after a year or two is not good enough, however, and most people, of all ages, in communities and towns, felt that a non-Kriol speaker's comprehension of a conversation heard in passing, between Aboriginal students, would be restricted indeed.

S.T., in reference to teachers' comprehension of such a group conversation, laughed

> "He's got no hope of understanding! Well it goes back to the same thing again, if he's a new teacher he hasn't got a hope in the world of understanding them! This is where the Education Department fall down, they just haven't gone to look into it like this, like its being looked into now. It should have been done years ago."
>
> T21166

S.T. elaborated further:

Interviewer: "If the teacher comes along when they're talking about something they did last weekend. Is he going to understand that?"

S.T. "yeah ... he'd understand that. If he's been here a year or so ... If they're telling him a story or so. But if he asks what, what did you say? They'll all clam up on him see. But he'll still understand to a certain degree, what they were saying ...."

This whole area is not a simple one, however. As the following statements indicate, young people appear to have quite a degree of control over the 'availability' of their conversation to outsiders:

C.D., 25 "If kids don't want whites to know what they are talking about, ... they use Kriol."

Kriol/Standard Australian English speaker, F.D., a young twenty-five year old Kununurra mother, explaining why teachers and kids *sometimes* understand each other said:

> "teachers these days fall down to our level ..."

but nevertheless:

> "white people put too much High English in."

Speaking about older people she said:

> "often grandparents grow up kids; it's hard for them to understand teachers."
>
> T22400

From Malan, a community at Lake Gregory, the same point was made more strongly by P.C., Nagarra, thirty-nine year old multilingual mother:

> "Standard English is out of the question where old people are concerned - almost everything about the Gadiya are totally foreign."
>
> (written comment by P.C.)

P.C. is one of a few people of her generation in this community who speaks a traditional language as well as Kriol and English, and one of an even smaller select band who are literate in a tribal language.

S.T. quoted the necessity for teachers to be able to 'take time out' to understand kids, and then kids would take time out, he said, to talk to them properly; he quoted two teachers (one Gadiya, one Aboriginal) who had left the area, as having been able to use the Kriol on occasion to the children. They were well liked and 'just fell into place'. He and his wife agreed that both were excellent teachers. His wife, thirty-five year old S.T., agreeing on the need for understanding echoed the feeling of almost everyone I spoke to when she said:

> "I think there should be more Aboriginal teachers."
>
> T21212

In discussing how schools can help in teaching language, however, she disagreed with her husband:

> "I don't agree on this Pidgin English [that it should be taught]. I reckon they should be at least taught in English, proper English. Teachers shouldn't use Kriol."

M.T., twenty-five year old town mother, agreed with this. Most kids talk Kriol anyway, she said - they don't need to be taught it. In school children should be taught 'Gadiya way, in English; proper schooling way ... if they talk Kriol all the time they will get laughed at if they go for big city. Kriol is a bad way of talking.'

N.I., forty-three, of a northern town:

> "I correct my kids from speaking Kriol - it's OK for talking to the elderly - I speak it too sometimes ... [My daughter - she's 10] is terrible for her Pidgin English! It's alright here but not in a big town where people take notice how you speak. Everybody round here speaks like that - it's just that it's natural ..."
>
> T141410

> "People round [northern town] ... the only time they speak English is when talking they're talking to a white man. It's not really dying out, it's used every day ... in the orphanage they used to [use] it."
>
> T141444

While people are concerned that their children should learn English, it is probable that in every Aboriginal home in the region Kriol is used. Some people spoke of the negative attitudes of non Kimberley people to the creole but there are strong attitudes in the East Kimberley which militate against common usage of Standard English. Children using Standard English speech may be derided as 'posh' or followed by calls of 'Gadiya, Gadiya!'

O.D., Standard Australian English and Kimberley Creole speaker, says:

> "I don't like to say that Pidgin is not the right way ..."
>
> T332030

O.D. maintains that it is an everyday way of speech for people of the region.

Difficulties occur at school however. Language problems begin for some on the first day:

> "Now if you have a teacher standing there and saying "Good morning, class. Now today you will read a story about the three bears" you might have year one kids who have never heard that kind of speech ..."
>
> T332033

O.D. explains the value of trained, local teacher aides, who can translate what the Standard English speaking teacher is saying, and can also explain to the teacher what the child is saying.

Extra confusion often occurs because words apparently identical in Standard Australian English and Kimberley Creole may have different meanings.

The seriousness of the problem is exemplified by the worries of twenty-three year old F.M., a young mother who is guardian of two primary school nephews. She lives in a community close to an East Kimberley town where the two boys should attend the local state school some two-and-a-half to three kilometres away.

F.M.'s mother tongue is Kimberley Creole (Kriol). She began school at the age of twelve in the local town then completed her high schooling in Broome and later Perth where she spent her final year, Year 9. She spent a short time at Pundulmurra[1] and has some typing skills. She speaks fluent Kriol and Standard Australian English, and says she began to understand the traditional language of her family late in her teens. Her father is multilingual, speaking Djaru, Walmajarri and Kukatja. Her mother is a Kitja speaker, and her grandmother speaks Walmajarri. This family, including her 2 adult sisters and younger brother and sister, share her home, a two roomed corrugated iron house only eighteen months ago connected to running water. Family members speak either Djaru or heavy Kriol in their daily life. She and her older sister, who has attended school in the Kimberley region, speak Standard English to non-Aborigines. Speaking of her nephew, F.M. says:

> "Terry (7 years old) has trouble at school. He can't speak English properly yet. 'E mix it all up. I think it will take him a while to really speak English .. but they [the kids in the community] can't understand what we speak - like, Djaru - yet, he can't get it yet. Take him a while. When they mongst their own people, they don't talk much English you know, and people shouting at them here [in different languages] but when they go to school they got to pay attention to that one person you know. He does like school, but when he sees the big kids staying back, he wants to stay back too."

Here, in a few graphic words, F.M. has described the dilemma of the child, discussed above by O.D. (T33 2 030).

At home for the first five or six years of his life, the child leads a socially rich and secure life in the guardianship of a community of relations, allowing him, by mainstream Australian standards, a high degree of independent decision making. Mixing with his peers and relations from similar tribal backgrounds but different linguistic groups, he is part of a generation which has created the Kriol language and continues to use it, broadening and defining its lexicon and syntax, enriching it from all source languages. In this environment he can, and often does, avoid the obligation of responding to relations in the tribal language in favour of answering them in Kriol, as they too understand and speak it as a first language, like himself, or as a second language.

In his sixth year the child is jolted from his life of independence to face a hitherto only dimly felt pressure from the Gadiya world. He is expected now to sit from a certain hour to a certain hour, in a particular desk in a specified room in the school buildings in town, listening to a new variety of language spoken in tones of authority to him by a stranger, who expects him to

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[1] Aboriginal Technical Institute in Port Hedland.

(a) understand it;
(b) react to it in ways which are new to him;
(c) often forego doing what he has decided is appropriate in favour of what the stranger (teacher) decides is appropriate; and
(d) return and participate in this process day after day.

It does not come easily.

Perhaps the simplest statements given in answer to the 'why' of Question 13 explain the lack of understanding best;

B.C., thirty-five year old townsperson:

> "White people can't understand Kriol, Aboriginals can't understand High Standard English."
>
> T32236

or, from another town, M.N., thirty-two years old:

> "Aboriginal speak their Kriol and traditional language and Gadiya speak High English."
>
> (Interviews: Written comment by respondent).

The problems begin with the first day of primary school and they do not cease by the time the children reach high school. K.M., who is working with secondary students in an East Kimberley town high school, told of serious problems with year nine students, many of whom can read only at a grade four level. "Their maths is very poor", he said, "but they do not understand the words of the question, let alone the sum itself." He feels that the problem is largely due to English language difficulties and notes that the same students are very fast at number work in relation to card playing. Similar comments were made by a young man who had worked as a teacher aide in a community school in the region. He described the difficulties of trying to teach a high school syllabus to secondary aged students with mixed reading levels down to Year 2 level. He feels that the students have not reached an adequate level of reading by the time they reach secondary school.

Available information on reading levels of Aboriginal students in other parts of Australia (none could be obtained for the East Kimberley) indicate that there is some urgency for investigative work in this area, so that more appropriate education programmes can be devised as soon as possible.

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGES IN EAST KIMBERLEY SCHOOLS

The question of the teaching of traditional languages is a central issue for the tradition-oriented people of the East Kimberley region. An integral part of the transmission of culture and tradition, language is the pivot on which traditional people balance the options they see available to them to educate the young of both primary and high school age. Therefore, the issue must be faced squarely and discussed with them if the stated determination of education authorities to consult and involve communities in education matters is to hold any credence.

To explore the attitudes and viewpoints of the people of the region on this issue, I presented the four following hypothetical possibilities to them asking them to choose which they thought would be the most suitable in their community. Question 16(d) asks:

> 'Would you like your child to:
>
> (i) learn an Aboriginal language at school?
>
> (ii) learn **in** an Aboriginal language at school?
>
> (iii) have the option of learning an Aboriginal language at school?
>
> (iv) learn about Aboriginal languages and culture at school?'

On the basis of their responses to parts (a), (b) and (c), as well as (d), above, of Question 16, together with information given in Question 10, I was able to gain a high degreee of confidence in the reliability and representativeness of the information given us in the many group meetings of the first round of talks.

While equal numbers of fringe camp, community and outstation people chose alternatives (i) and (iv), few chose (iii). Five times as many townspeople chose alternatives (iii) and (iv) as chose (i) and (ii). Of an overall total of 72 participants who answered Question 10(j) -

> 'Do you think children growing up today need to know
> (a) traditional language
> (b) creole
> (c) English?'

sixty eight, or 94 per cent listed traditional language as a language children need to know.

The message given to us to convey in this report is clear; people do not want to see existing languages ignored by educationists.

Viewpoints of how to give formal recognition and acknowledgement to the languages of the region fell into two categories which broadly coincided with living situations in (a) communities and outstations, (b) towns.

(a) In the more traditional communities people see it as desirable for their children to continue speaking the language used daily in the family. In two major communities in the region language programmes are already under way. In both these communities one language group is dominant.

(b) In the towns a different language situation prevails. Table 16 shows that town populations can include up to seven different language groups. Within these groups, most speakers upwards of middle age are multilingual; members of all groups speak Kriol. Town populations also include mother tongue Kriol speakers, some of whom are bilingual/bidialectal in both Kriol and S.A.E.[1] All these groups rated the value of traditional languages highly, listing the need to know traditional language as often as the need to know English. They judged it to be useful to children growing up in the region.

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[1] And of course monolingual non Aboriginal Australian English speakers, not included in this survey.

(a) The traditional viewpoint

Speakers of traditional languages want their children to be able to speak their language and in the majority of cases see it as desirable for them to be able to read and write it. The question is how best to achieve this aim given the present state of our (combined Aboriginal and European) knowledge. In the rapidly changing social environments of these regional languages, a major cooperative effort is needed by communities and educationists if existing traditional languages are to be maintained.

For some linguistic groups, erosion of the traditionallanguage has gone on too long and the languages are dead. In other groups the language is still spoken by an ageing population but no speakers have emerged among the young. These languages will certainly not be in use in the next generation.

Some linguistic groups who have moved out in small groups from towns and larger settlements to traditional lands have managed to maintain integrity and have a high degree of linguistic homogeneity. They have produced an environment in which traditional language can flourish. This is certainly the case at Yaralman, (Ringer's Soak), where Djaru is spoken in preference to other languages in daily interchanges by young and old alike. In contrast is the situation at Lunja community near Hall's Creek. Here a related community of Djaru people has been settled for some eight years, during which the young have increasingly opted to speak Kriol at the expense of Djaru. This is due largely to the mixed social experiences in which the group participates with people from other tribal groups speaking mutually unintelligible languages, necessitating the use of a common language. Often among adults the chosen lingua franca is Walmajarri or 'Kriol-Walmajarri mix'. For young children Kriol is the chosen medium. Nevertheless there is a strong case for a language programme here.

Further evidence in support of the idea that in some communities the traditional language is truly viable comes from Malan community, at Lake Gregory, where B.K., Nagamarra, thirty-five, mother of a teenage family said:

> "I think most of the kids round here, and round Balgo area speak Standard English; you don't hear this Kriol; [when they talk to grannys], they usually talk to them in [traditional] language. [They use Kriol] when they get mixed up with - like kids in Red Hill; then they start trying to talk Kriol themselves."

Husband Djangari: "mm, when they get mixed up with those people from Hall's Creek."

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1. And of course monolingual European Australian English speakers, not included in this survey.

Malan children, like all East Kimberley Aboriginal children, can speak Kriol. The community is, however, basically a Walmajarri language group and includes multilingual Walmajarri, Djaru and Kukatja speakers. One of the main community language concerns here is not that the children speak Kriol in preference to traditional language, but that they speak Kukatja in preference to Walmajarri. Mothers complain that when they speak to their children in Walmajarri, the children answer back in Kukatja. This is put down to the long-standing association of many people in this community with Balgo (many lived there with their children before settling at Malan) where the main traditional language is Kukatja. A lot of Malan Walmajarri adults are also Kukatja speakers.

'We are Walmajarri people' I was told by a community leader. 'The school here was set up for Walmajarri kids to learn Walmajarri.'

T402020

The community would prefer children to be following the Walmajarri language tradition. The point here is that in this community traditional language is spoken in most everyday exchanges. All but the very old community members speak Kriol and a number of people in the approximately forty-five and under age bracket speak English, which they have learned as a second language. However, unless people go visiting to Hall's Creek, some 350 kilometres away, there is no need for Kriol to be spoken. With the backup of a school language programme, in a nurturing environment such as this, a traditional language may well flourish. The emphasis needs to be, I was told in this community, on achieving high levels of competence in English and in Walmajarri.

Interviewer: "Well, now, how do you think that should be handled in schools - especially out here where you people are talking all these different languages, and you've got the three different varieties, the Standard English, the Kriol and the Kukatja - and Walmajarri too, and the teachers coming in have got only English?"

P.C.: "Well, there should be a recognition of the languages, whether it's Aboriginal or European or what, you know, or whether it's the mixed type such as Kriol. They ought to be recognised for the purposes of - that is - we must confess that it plays an important part you know, language, it doesn't matter whether you've got Kriol or Standard English or the traditional language, you know.

"I think they ought to be realised. It should be a known fact that people do use them."

T401186

P.C.: Nagarra, Malan, Lake Gregory.
Walmajarri, Kriol and English speaker.

Halting the erosion of traditional languages is not, however, something that the schools can accomplish alone. It is not something that non-traditional language speakers can do, however literate or skilled in technological methods and linguistic recording techniques they may be. A language is maintained in a group if there is a reason for it; children will speak the language of their parents if they hear that language in daily use and need to use it. They will use the language if for them it serves a function more efficiently than any other in which they are competent. This does not appear to be happening with some traditional languages in some communities today.

There is an urgent need, therefore, if the expectations of traditional communities are to be met, for collaborative work in each language area by experts in the field; that is traditional language speakers, and educationists and linguists.

EDUCATION AUTHORITIES RESPONSE TO THE LANGUAGE SITUATION
Traditional language in schools.

As shown earlier (Table 16) traditional languages are in common daily use in most communities in the region. In eleven communities there are already schools. It has not been, however, the practice of the schools to utilise the traditional background of the students. There are serious problems and educational anomalies associated with a dominant and fundamentally different cultural group passing on its traditions and skills through the school, to the youth of a group which has its own often opposing traditions and culture. Schools should take this difference into account. Those schools which recognise the language and culture of their students are the schools which are favoured by tradition-oriented people. These are the schools which are adopting a 'two-way' approach. Almost without exception they are non-government schools.

Both at Turkey Creek in 1979 and at Balgo in 1984, it was the agreement Church to adopt a two-way philosophy in the administration of education which was the deciding factor in the community choice of a Catholic school. The Catholic Church in contracting to attempt the provision of language programmes, however monumental a task, and to involve the community in adopting a two-way policy in the school, offered an option not previously available, and still not available in government schools.[1]

As recently as 1981 and 1984 respectively, Krungal and Yilili communities through cautious independent initiatives set up tiny community schools with a similar philosophy of two-way education and community involvement. In 1984, also in response to unsuccessful attempts to negotiate a two-way (Djaru/English) or three way (Djaru/Kriol/English) school with the State Government Education Department, the Kundat Djaru community at Yaralman, Ringer's Soak, accepted a Catholic Education Commission offer to research the feasibility of such a school. After one year's trial the school will now go ahead with full community support, although not as yet offering a language programme.

People at Ringer's Soak spoke in some detail of their aspirations and the difficulties they face in giving their children adequate education in such a remote location. They have chosen this way - a two-way school on site for the younger children - after some years of experimenting with the alternatives of placing children in a town hostel, which proved in many ways unsatisfactory.

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1. The Government school at Kalumburu in the last 18 months has begun to involve local traditional teachers in its programmes.

Community chairman, S.S., Djambin, about 60 years old, told us:

> With no town here, maybe this lot [of kids] will be better ... Town was no good. We've got two teachers now; we want to teach them up, bit by bit, train them up too... We hope they'll learn Gadiya way and come back Aboriginal way, still speaking their own language. Like those people that have been to Balgo school.
>
> "...We've got to think carefully about work. Now we've got our own school here, they might learn."
>
> Translated from Creole statement.
> Ringer's Soak, July 1985.

Councillor G.S., Djambin, senior community member and spokesperson, describes what he sees as the best way of education for children of the community.

> "Tuwei skul ai rekin. If dei kin raititdan Djaru langa dis skul, if dei kin raititdan, dei rait. If dei raitimdan Djaru and Kadiya."
> *I think it should be a two-way school. If they can write down Djaru in this school, they'll be alright; if they can learn to read and write Djaru and English.*
>
> T291523

He further describes some of his ideas of how a two-way school will operate:

> "Dei garrra part of it there, det Djaru langgus; raititdan tharrawan, skulim tharrawan; and dijan Kadiya, skulim Kadiya skul tu, seimtaim."
>
> Kriol/English
>
> *"In part of the school they will have Djaru language - write it, and learn it; at the same time in another area there will be English, where they will learn the European way."*
>
> T291523

In regard to the teaching of English, he is on pedagogically firm ground when he says:

> "Wat Inglidg wi tokin tidei? Kimberley style; well that's it! Didjlat kid, mosta dem tokin Kimberley style na; wen they growinap, maitbi git more skul, they mait start on that nekswan, High English. Dey garra start olawei lang laik that y'know. This Kimberley style, that's so people can understan ... that's weya i garra gowin, from there on, I reckon."
> *"What kind of English are we talking now? Kimberley style; well that's it! Most of these kids talk Kimberley style. As they get*

> *older, and go through school, then they might begin with that next one, High English. They should start gradually from what they know, like that, you know. This Kimberley style, we use that because people understand it. That's where it's got to start, from there on, I reckon."*
>
> T291504

In educational terms, this observation makes sense. To guide the child in his knowledge from the known to the new is the best method of imparting knowledge.

The people at Ringer's Soak value multilingualism and hope that their children will acquire English 'for everything; for all kinds of jobs and for paperwork, like the kind of work you're doing' they told me.

> "Yu mait go out to natha pleis an yu mait miidim dipren pipul. Wat you garra sei? Well i maiti garra sei Inglidj ... - i maitbi garra sei i gat is own langgus y'know. An i mait ask yu ...
>
> "Bikas wi kaan jus know wan langgus bikas wi - long time ago, ol ol pipul was talking any sort of langgus y'know, datdawei djekin pipul, wi la seim trak, y'know, ai rekin.
>
> "... we gowat to natha pleis, wi talking - if we go to Walmajarri people we talking Walmajarri; go to Walbiri people out there, Northern Territory, and we go out talking with Walbiri; we go to Kukatja people we talking Kukatja, like that you know... or we go out to miidum yu, laika Kadiya yu talking tidei, well ai speak English, mi."
> *If you go out to another place you might meet different people. How will you talk? Well the other person might speak English, .. or he might say he's got his own language,and he might ask you [if you speak it] ... Well, we can't just know only one language because - a long time ago, the old people spoke many languages you know. That's why our generation, the next after them, I reckon, we must take the same road, you see.*
>
> *'If we go to another place, we talk; if we go to Walmajarri people, we speak Walmajarri; if we visit Walbiri people out here in the Northern Territory we speak Walbiri. We visit Kukatja people and we speak Kukatja.*
>
> *That's the way it is, you know. Or we go to meet you, [the researcher] and you're talking like you are now, like a European; well I speak English, myself.'*
>
> T2915

The community at Ringer's Soak is multilingual, from the old down to the very young. At night round the campfire, a visiting city person will realise he/she is a visitor in a foreign land. The conversation is in Djaru, or Ngardi. Children drawing pictures in the sand by the fire's light invent stories about them and laugh and joke with each other in Djaru. Listening to a Djaru tale told by a grownup they comment and query in Djaru; songs sung may be in Djaru or any one of two or three desert languages.

The Djaru people value their heritage and are convinced that the children will not lose their culture. Discussing the practical difficulties of literacy in Djaru, because their aim is to include Aboriginal culture and language in the school as well as in daily life, a senior man told me they were happy to have:

> "Kadiyawan [education] first, bikas important thing, Kadiyawan, bikas [Djaru] not tu gud for peipawurk, anykinda raiting, laik dis, yu know. We wanta Kadiya - they understand Djaru [already]... we wanum dis skul prabli for Kadiyawei, an Aboriginal way lilbit, bikas dey understand alridi blakfala y'know, Aborigine skul, Aborigine wurrud. Dey gotta rait ful la is brein; they know ol thirru. But djama dis Kadiya skul, they don know nothing. Important thing they wanta know bat dis skuling They kaan ludj rown kaltja, nathing .. bikas wi ina kaltja from ol pipul raait thirru rait thirru, rait thirru wi in a kultja; wi kaan liib our kultja.
>
> "Wi kaan trandim jis laika kadiya; ranim laika Kadiya, wi wanna ran dis tuwei."
> *English literacy should come first because Djaru is not good for paperwork in meetings and contact with Europeans. We need that most - after all they [the children] understand Djaru already. We need this school to teach proper literacy skills, the European way (Gadiya way). It should nevertheless include a little Aboriginal culture. The children already understand Aboriginal culture. The children already understand Aboriginal things, Aboriginal language. It's in their mind, they know it through and through - they know nothing about Gadiya school, and it's important that they should get to know about schooling. It's impossible that they should lose their own culture, because we are* ***in*** *the culture all the time. From the old people, through and through, right through we are in the culture.*
>
> *We can't leave our culture. We can't leave the kids stranded, like Gadiya, we can't run a Gadiya school, we want to run this two-way.'*
> T291540

> "Wi garra lotta skulboi and skulgirl iya; ai donno widjan kin wurruk for us for raitimdan Djaru."
> *We have a lot of schoolchildren here; I don't know who will be able to work for the community in Djaru literacy.*
> T291552

There are many problems ahead with such isolated schools - not least the problem of needing young community people to work in the school, to help write down the language and the urgent need for them to have training facilities and support to do this.

(b) **The western oriented viewpoint**

This group comprises mainly townspeople, who are light Kimberley Creole speakers, who usually have little productive competence in traditional languages, and who usually speak Standard Australian English with a Kimberley regional accent. Of a regional total of 72 respondents to Question 10(i), 33, about half, came from the three towns of Wyndham, Kununurra and Halls Creek and fit into this category of speaker. Almost all have attended primary school and some have completed between one and three years of high school. Some people have trained in various work skills and professions; some are at present in paid employment, others are full-time parents. As quoted before, Question 10(j) asks:

'Do you think children growing up today need to know:
1. traditional language;
2. creole;
3. English?'

Twenty-nine respondents out of 33 Kriol speakers, or 91 per cent, indicated that they thought children would benefit from knowing a traditional language. The usual reason given was so that they could better communicate with relations.

TABLE 19: RESPONSES OF FIRST LANGUAGE KRIOL SPEAKERS TO QUESTION 10(j) N =33

	TKE	TE	E
Wyndham	6	2	-
Kununurra	3	11	2
Hall's Creek	7	1	1
TOTAL	16	14	3

Total first language Kriol speakers who indicated a need for children to know a traditional language = 29

These people are largely mission/hostel educated people who have in almost every case a family history in which some members have experienced long periods of separation from tribal relations. Almost all lead mainstream Australian oriented lives. They have varying degrees of knowledge about their traditional language. The majority no longer speak it and have not therefore passed it on to their children, but are familiar in varying degrees with some of the concepts and lexicon of the traditional languages. Such knowledge comes largely through the numerous traditional language loan words and concepts of Kriol, the most significant examples of which are the concepts and lexicon of kinship terminology.

Responses to Questions 10(j) from this group often carried the comment 'all three are important'. This in fact is very much the general feeling in the region. Other comments offered were:

> "All three; English is the main thing, but Kriol might be handy to you in your work."
>
> T172312 WYND

> "[if kids knew the traditional language] they could translate for people who can't speak English."

> "It would be good if traditional languages were written down; then they can be taught."
>
> C.E., 45 year old Halls Creek mother
> (written comment Int. Sch.)

Twenty-six year old teaching assistant N.I., marked traditional language and English as being needed by children growing up today, saying:

> "A lot don't know much about it [the traditional language] and they don't know much about their tribal background and that; and I think a lot of them are losing their identity. That's one of the things that ... grandfather used to talk about a lot. Old people would prefer young ones to know their background and tradition. I think they should too."

> "I don't see anything wrong with knowing all about English and how to live like the white people, but I think they should still keep their identity."
>
> T161095

O.D., of a different town, echoed these sentiments when he said:

> "First of all I think Aboriginal children growing up today should know their own native tongue. Every other nationality or tribe, whatever, speak their own native tongue .. their own traditional language, because - to give them a sense of identity and belonging. So they can get up, like the Dutch can get up,

> and say "I'm from Holland; and I speak my language." Aboriginal kids should be able to do that too."

Responses clearly indicate the positive attitudes prevalent in the region today towards traditional languages.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

Clearly the traditional languages are valued. Responses to Question 10(a) - (k) established that there is a positive regard for these languages throughout the region. They are seen as a useful communication medium not only by the speakers themselves but also by people who cannot speak them. One mother said:

> "I wish they would have taught us; that's one thing I missed out."
>
> B.C., 36 years T372605

Some people, while indicating their awareness that their children would benefit by a knowledge of the traditional languages heard in their daily life, felt that there was a problem in teaching the languages in the town schools. In settlements where all members of the group speak one language there is general agreement of the desirability of a language programme. In the townships, however, the schools are part of quite a different language scene.

In Hall's Creek for example people of many tribes mix together; Djaru and Kitja children, children of mixed backgrounds and European children constitute the student population.

Teaching all the children the Kitja way, that is the Kitja language and culture, or all the Djaru way, that is the Djaru language and culture, is not likely to be acceptable to all groups.[1] The present situation in government schools however is one in which none of the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Aboriginal students (almost 90 per cent of the government school population in Halls Creek and 35 per cent in Wyndham, 28 per cent in Kununurra) are recognised; certainly they are not used as bases on which to build further knowledge.

Commenting on the statement from first-round group meetings prefacing Question 16, one mother, a teacher aide with some years experience in the school, said somewhat caustically of townspeople:

> "I reckon if they want their kids not to forget about their culture, let them mix in more with their Aboriginal grandparents and aunties and uncles and get them to teach them that."
>
> F.N., 35 year old T311595

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1. To find one language for teaching in the school which would suit everyone may prove to be difficult; allegiances are strong. One young girl told me when Djaru classes were offered for a short period at the local school some years ago, her parents were quite adamant that until Kitja classes were instituted, (the language of her mother's group) she was not to attend.

This mother felt that:

> "Well my kids - if they want to learn traditional language they'll have to do it in their own time, in their own way. I'd like them to speak their language, but the way things are going now I doubt whether they ever will unless they do it under their own steam."

With some years experience as a teacher aide, she felt that schools do their best, but that as far as traditional language is concerned, 'just the atmosphere itself will discourage the kids from learning'. If a decision were made to acknowledge and teach about Aboriginal language and culture in schools, this respondent maintained that the way to do it would be to make time in the syllabus and take children out in a bus with three or four traditional people so that the lesson could be in a more learning-conducive situation.

Suggestions such as this were common during our survey.

Question 16(d) was an attempt to sound out the possible degree of interest in or support for the following different approaches:

16(d) Would you like your child to:

- (i) learn an Aboriginal language at school?
- (ii) learn **in** an Aboriginal language at school?
- (iii) have the option of learning an Aboriginal language at school?
- (iv) learn about Aboriginal languages and culture at school?

In discussing Question 16(d) some town people felt that ideally the option should be available to students to study an Aboriginal language at school:

> "Some kids might rather learn an Aboriginal language than say Japanese."
>
> C.T., 47 years, Kununurra father

> "Our kids should be taught our own language, right?"
>
> Q.C., T312576

Others felt that in town schools a better strategy might be to introduce an Aboriginal studies component which included information about languages rather than, or as well as, having a language option. This would be more attractive to a larger number of students for a variety of reasons - not least being that in the towns the schools are populated by children from many language groups including Standard Australian English.

Although most town children are Kriol speakers and not competent in a tribal language, many will be familiar with a lot of the concepts and some of the lexicon of the traditional languages. This is explained quite simply by:

(a) the overlap or borrowing of both concepts and lexicon by Kriol from traditional languages;

(b) town school children belong to families which often include many relatives who are more traditional than themselves, and therefore traditional concepts and values and the words which express them are part of their lives.

SUMMARY

Traditional language

Traditional languages are valued and relevant today in the region. They are valued as a necessary part of education by

(a) tradition-oriented people because they speak them, and

(b) Kriol and Kimberley English speakers who have lost their language and who would like their children to know about and be able to use their language with relations.

Both groups are keen for appropriate and adequate funding, resources and infrastructure to be made available for the development of programmes relevant to each situation. Both groups stress that the responsibility for the planning of traditional language and culture teaching lies with traditional people. Therefore programme development should be through collaboration between traditional language speakers and people who have specialized knowledge in linguistics and curriculum planning.

English

Traditional people see their most urgent need as learning to read and write in English; that is English literacy. They want their own language and culture to be both acknowledged by the schools and part of the school programme. But they want to see the Gadiya concentrating on teaching the Gadiya skills which traditional people most urgently need to acquire.

Western oriented people put forward similar viewpoints. They would like to see teaching about traditional language and culture in town schools as a small but regular part of the programme. They stressed that the teaching should be by the experts, traditional people. They want to see fully functioning programmes, with the aim of providing relevant and necessary cultural development and enrichment, not a substitute for the teaching of other relevant and necessary skills for work and life in the broader social scene, but as a strengthening of the child's social base.

Kriol

> "I think outstation schools and schools in communities are helpful; it would make all the difference to give them the basics. Maybe use [Kriol] too to make them understand."
> Teacher Aide, 26 years old, northern town.
> T16130

The question of Kriol literacy is in its early stages of discussion. It was touched on by a few respondents, one of whom had visited Bamyili school in the Northern territory where initial literacy is taught in Kriol; the respondent noted its relevance to the East Kimberley. Some members of a tradition-oriented town community near Hall's Creek also have shown interest in the concept of Kriol literacy, (children of this community are first language Kriol speakers whom parents would like to see competent in their traditional language, Djaru.

All communities of Aboriginal people in the region aspire to some sort of language programmes. In traditional communities the aspiration is that children will become bilingual in traditional languages and Standard Australian English. In towns, social studies courses should include regional and local social studies, involving teaching by traditional people, and part of such lessons should be teaching about traditional languages. Traditional language classes should be instituted and run (as options in town schools) through language centres. But what of Kriol? This report indicates that there is a strong awareness among East Kimberley Aboriginal people that there are major differences between Kriol and Standard or High English. The teaching community needs, in fairness to both teachers and students, to be made more aware of the nature of Kriol and the relationships between the traditional languages, Kriol and English, as they are used in the region today.

Some light Kriol/Kimberley English speaking respondents, while explaining that Kriol is highly significant in English interference and in misunderstandings between students and teachers, expressed at the same time ambivalent attitudes towards its use in schools. Some spoke strongly against the idea of 'teaching Kriol', that is Kriol literacy, in town schools: others suggested it may be important in initial literacy programmes in some outstations and communities. Some respondents felt that non-Aboriginal teachers should not use Kriol as a teaching medium, even orally. Yet other speakers (sometimes even the same respondents) noted the positive effects of teachers' tolerance and awareness of the local language situation, including participation in learning about local Kriol idiom and using it at appropriate times, saying it was of value if teachers who knew it did use Kriol if it helped to make points clear or to make children at ease.

Underlying such ambivalence is, I suggest, the feeling that there is a danger if the teacher becomes too accepting of and competent in Kriol, the student may - even if unconsciously by both teacher and student - use less and less Standard English and therefore not progress satisfactorily in his/her knowledge of it.

Our results provide evidence that the implications of the creation and expansion of Kriol and the extent of its usage must be considered carefully by both communities and the teaching profession together. In this way proper and effective language courses can be prepared.

Town parents called for further research in this area and the development of appropriate English teaching strategies.[1]

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[1] The Summer Institute of Linguistics Bible Translators in conjunction with local Hall's Creek Kriol speakers have begun some work in this area, and have produced, as well as religious material, a small number of short books for children in the East Kimberley dialect of Kriol.

CHAPTER 9: ON-SITE EDUCATION

ON-SITE EDUCATION

> "That's what we're trying to think about - trying to make a school out in the bush; and get some sort of a teacher aide out there and he can give them a bit of education every day; something like that you know ... we did put submission for that but we don't know what happening."
>
> D.K., 38 yrs, outstation
> T121330

Provision of on-site education is favoured by respondents in all communities.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

> Q. What are the reasons why some children stay away from school?
> A. Kids often want to be with their mother and father.
> Q. Why do some parents allow their kids to stay away from school?
> A. Kids like to be with mother and father better than with relations.
>
> Outstation respondent R.R.
> T191-

Towns and larger communities already have primary schools. One of the major difficulties however in the development of the smaller East Kimberley outstation settlements is the problem of children's schooling. Aboriginal families feel that they have a right and a duty to keep their young children with them and therefore favour on-site schooling.

Smaller new outstation settlements are an attempt by groups to reassemble according to more traditional patterns, regain some degree of autonomy, and assert some control over the lives of the younger generation and the future of the group. The new settlements represent a deliberate move away from the debilitating social conditions of the larger communities. The problems of the major communities of the region can be in part attributed to the fact that historically, far from being culturally harmonious groupings of traditional settlers, they were rather formed as refugee camps by the government or missions of the day. In these camps some groups have now lived two generations or more as displaced persons - so long that new allegiances have formed among the young, and language shifts have taken place. Many people may now regard these larger communities as home. Nevertheless the development of outstations is everywhere regarded as witness to the strength of traditional ties and a positive move not only towards the reduction of tensions in the main settlements but towards developing a viable system of small satellite settlements servicing and being serviced by the larger mother communities which are in fact incipient towns.

There is a dilemma with regard to education in those communities. It is on the shoulders of the young adult members of outstation groups that a large part of the work of developing the settlements must fall. The young and middle aged members of these groups are the link with the wider society. It is the young men in particular to whom the old look for the future management of the settlements, relying on their knowledge of English and their familiarity with the mainstream system. Traditional people are now aware that to gain the hoped for autonomy the next generation will need a greater degree of western education than ever before.

The dilemma is that to establish and further develop the new settlements young adults, often the parents of pre- and school-aged children, must be there. To educate their children and themselves in literacy and the further skills necessary for competent economic management of their own lives and of the future of the community, they recognise the need for western style education, available only at the nearest major town or community which may be up to 150 or more kilometres away or even further distant in an urban centre.

These parents have three options:

1. Keep their children with them at the outstation settlement rather than hand them over to the responsibility of family in the nearest major community, who, being unable to control external social circumstances, may not be in a position to look after them to the childrens' best advantage.

   Although children living with their family at the outstation miss school, I was told by one group, they are at least not too ashamed to speak their father's language.

2. Leave the children with relations in a town or settlement where they can attend school. This works effectively for some; for others where suitable board with reliable family cannot be found, children tend to "run amok", "bail up" from school and so receive inadequate education both western style and traditional style. This is an option which tends to force the child into a marginal lifestyle, rejecting the 'broken' traditional life of many around him/her, and yet not fully participating in the new style of mainstream traditions and skills offering in the schools.

3. Return with their children, to live in the nearest town or community where school and some services are provided, leaving the outstation to the old people, who are thus deprived of their knowledge, skills and labour.

Parents of young children, the potential workforce of a developing outstation, are forced into making difficult choices. They can attempt to develop the new settlement, by living and working there, and in so doing deny their children access to schooling, or they can live in the nearest large community with their children, thus denying their outstation group the benefit of their ideas and labour and denying their children the possibility of future successful development of their outstation. Parents generally do not favour giving over the responsibility of their young children to relations in a distant settlement. Many children prefer to be with their immediate family.

Small groups already established or in the process of becoming established would above all prefer to have their young children with them. All such groups with whom I spoke indicated that at least one or two young literate group members would be interested in a "teacher or teacher aide" role in schooling young children on site. Several such groups said they had approached the government about these problems but had had no feed back.

An interim or alternative suggestion from some settlements outlying the major communities of Turkey Creek and Balgo and the town of Hall's Creek was to provide a school bus service in to the nearest school. Transport, fuel costs and repairs are a severe and constant problem for communities in which one or two vehicles often serve up to 80 or more people for all needs including emergencies.

Wherever numbers justify it and the group desires it, on site primary and pre primary schooling should be set up, either as small one or two teacher caravan schools, or some form of mobile outreach classroom from the nearest major school.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Towns

Secondary education is available up to year 10 in all towns. Most parents we spoke to would prefer to see certain changes:

1. Upper Secondary School.

   Years 11 and 12 should be available on site. Children of the region who attempt to complete these years in Perth or other towns often find the experience of living so far away from home a difficult one. For those who do opt to complete these years in the city or towns distant from the home community, parents would like to see Aboriginalisation of hostel staff, and more adequate pastoral care for students.

2. State High Schools and Traditional People.

   Some tradition-oriented people in communities and fringe settlements around the towns did not perceive the local government school to be available to their children as a high school option. They indicated that their children went to one of several available distant hostels, colleges or schools within the Catholic System, but the local government school had 'not asked them' whether their sons and daughters would like to attend. It seems likely that this view is widespread. It was a startling revelation of the lack of service to traditional people by government schools. Lack of communication seems complete in some locations between government school personnel and traditional people who are most in need of basic services.

3. Aboriginal Staffing in Hostels within the region.

   The majority of children from outstation groups must stay in town or the closest community if they wish to go to school. For some this means they miss out altogether . Communities for which Balgo is a resource and service centre told us that one of their big worries is the lack of satisfactory teenage boys' accommodation in that settlement. Girls, they felt, are at least catered for in a 'dormitory' although lacking the security and comfort of Aboriginal staff, but boys have no properly supervised hostel accommodation. They maintain that hostel accommodation with a high degree of Aboriginal control and staffing is highly desirable. Outstation groups do not like to send their teenage boys to what they see as an unstable social environment in large communities and towns in the region, where the responsibility for their proper participation in the education process often is thrown upon the shoulders of tradition-oriented relations who have little knowledge of what is expected of the boys educationally or how to help them achieve it.

The option then is to send students further afield for study, where they can stay in well appointed hostels, such as at Hall's Creek, Pallottine Centre in Perth, or residential colleges such as Nulungu Catholic College in Broome or Pundulmurra in Port Hedland.

The problems of distance, loneliness, friction between tribal groups and between town/outback students as well as the vexed question of adequate supervision become important factors inhibiting the students' performance at school. Parents felt that Aboriginal staff in both school and hostels would help alleviate these problems.

Town people are concerned that standards should be maintained at a level comparable with city schools. An academic approach should be maintained in what is offered; especially in English literacy and numeracy. This is an area which is a stumbling block for many Aboriginal children.

Project education is not favoured. Town parents feel that permanent groupings which place Aboriginal students in classes apart from the mainstream are not helpful to social development. They feel that there should be increased options in the high schools of the region particularly in the area of the teaching of bookkeeping, business and office skills, as well as work related options such as woodwork, carpentry, stockwork, and so on.

4. Homework Classes

The possibility of setting up homework classes was one strategy discussed by a number of respondents. There was a need seen by some respondents for out-of-school supervision and help with homework for both traditional and town children, of both government and Catholic schools.

To be effective and attractive to children, however, classes must be in a 'comfortable' venue, where children are at ease. In one town where homework classes had been tried and deemed unsuccessful the venue was a building socially accepted in the town as 'non Aboriginal territory'. Children were not likely to feel at ease there. One mother told us that they had homework classes

> "at this Centre where no Aboriginal people go anyway. In fact I think that was just set up for Aboriginal kids but I don't think any kids ever went along - it would have been too formal for them."
>
> KT21050

Some western-educated Aboriginal parents in a town had been interested in helping in homework classes, but it was decided at a meeting of parents and educationists in this town that teachers, not parents, should help.

The value of teacher aides and an Aboriginal liaison person in the schools has been stressed. The role of such persons could be invaluable in establishing the teacher-student-parent rapport necessary to make such classes a going concern.

Study Away From the Home Community - Keeping Options Open

Parents want to see their children, particularly in primary and early high school years, offered viable on-site options for achieving a standard of literacy and numeracy comparable with that of non-Aboriginal children, and adequate to enable them to continue studying to train in a profession or trade when they reach adulthood. People felt it was nevertheless important that the option should remain available for able students who desire it, to be educated away from home. Some younger parents were quite adamant that they wanted their children to be able to be well away from the negative social influences in East Kimberley towns when they reach their high school years. Young people commented that although they had found their own schooling away from home traumatic enough for them to give up and come home, they now place great value on the opportunity of being able to mix in and observe the life of another town or city, and that they would wish the same opportunity for their children.

Perceptions of the Varied Functions of the Teacher Aide - the Liaison Role[1]

> "The community should leave teaching to the teachers, but should try to produce a better understanding of the problems experienced by Aboriginal children."
>
> TB1079

In this study, people constantly made reference to the usefulness of local teacher aides in facilitating communication between teacher and students, and suggested that a most important strategy to improve both primary and high school teaching is to employ more teacher aides, and to institute the position of local liaison person.

A teacher aide described the results of a questionnaire she had circulated to parents in a town school to gauge their feelings on education issues.

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1. It was outside the terms of reference of this survey (that is, of Aboriginal Viewpoints) to include the European population. However a few European staff members of some schools told us that the local Teacher Aides were of invaluable assistance and, in more than one school, were often doing direct class teaching.

> "A lot of them said the idea of having a lot of teacher aides was good; they would have liked to see some male ones - which I think is true; they do need male ones for the boys - sometimes they can get really y'know hard to handle - out of hand. And they'd like to see some Aboriginal teachers, y'know, fully qualified teachers....A lot of us, we take classes on our own a lot of the time. Well last week I had grade 1 and 2 for the week, because ..... we were short staffed of five people (there's nine of us) .... so I had one class on my own."
>
> 25 year old N.B., northern town

Many teacher aides are currently engaged in upgrading their qualifications by correspondence through the Western Australian College of Advanced Education, and many expressed the desire to do teacher training but were unable to do so because of lack of facilities in the area.

Local teacher aides, or teaching assistants, are seen as playing a crucial role in East Kimberley classrooms. Most people felt that to maximize the quality of school learning, there should be one teaching assistant from the community or from the Kimberley region per classroom in the primary schools and possibly also in the high schools. They can, people suggested, be crucial to the effectiveness of teaching Aboriginal students in the following ways:

(a) assist the European teachers to understand the local language and traditions, lifestyle and problems by:

  (i) Being present and interacting generally in the school as staff members. As members of the East Kimberley Aboriginal population they are in a position to present Aboriginal viewpoints on specific issues.

  A young teacher aide of 25 years at an East Kimberley town school explained some of the functions of the position as follows:

> "Half my time is in the class; the other half is as a liaison officer for the school, working with the people of the town, - parents and also surveying employers as to what sort of skills the children need when they leave school. And I see a big part of my role as being - sort of educating some of the teachers.
>
> "Like, they came up to me last week and asked if I could find some Aboriginal person in town who could take the children out and show them some bush tucker; what they should eat and what they shouldn't eat. I said 'oh, yeah! Well I can do that!' they nearly fell backwards - 'oh!' they said, 'we thought that

> had died out! We thought you might be able to find some old full blood Aboriginal who just hadn't forgotten it!'
>
> "I explained to them that most of the children in the school know that anyway; it's just something they take for granted.
>
> "Aboriginal children are sometimes reluctant to talk about things like that ... because of pressures from in the class ... because non-Aboriginal children might rubbish them a bit."
>
> K.M. T171084

(ii) Letting teachers know the Aboriginal system of manners - what is acceptable and what is not acceptable or offending. As school staff, teaching assistants are in a position to explain and clarify these and other issues on behalf of the community. Local parents are often reluctant to initiate such discussion, and often react to unsuccessful cross-cultural encounters either by withdrawing their children from school, or, less tangible but equally important, their support for the offending school system.

(iii) Helping the teacher understand the speech of students.

(iv) When qualified and where appropriate, developing and conducting traditional language and/or Kriol curriculum and classes and/or assisting community appointed older traditional teachers in developing such curricula and classes together with the necessary consultants, in community language centres.

(v) Explaining and interpreting to teachers the children's behaviour and reactions in situations of cross-cultural comprehension breakdowns.

(b) Assist the children to gain more from the schooling experience:

(i) Their presence in the school at staff level as Aboriginal adults sharing responsibility and authority with non Aboriginal staff, teacher aides contribute to the ethnic pride, confidence and self esteem of Aboriginal students. Through teacher aides,

> "School can make children learn more from their parents when they come back home from the school"
>
> D.O. early twenties,
> Teacher Aide Kununurra Fringe Camp

Teacher assistants, by working among the Gadiya children, can help to promote understanding in the broader community.

In essence then, Aboriginal teaching assistants and non Aboriginal staff can work together for the benefit of the children. People feel that local teaching assistants in the schools are invaluable go-betweens for children, able to translate, confirm and validate children's verbal and behavioural output to the non Aboriginal teachers, and vice versa.

(ii) They can help children understand the teachers' cultural behaviour and explain to children about the mainstream teaching (style and content).

(iii) They can clarify to the child what behaviour is expected and what is unacceptable in the school, explain and discuss mainstream Australian customs and manners and elucidate teachers' reactions in situations of cross cultural comprehension breakdown.

(iv) They can help the children understand the Standard Australian English (High English) speech of the teachers. Question 14(f) asked:

> 'Is it better for the community to be
> (a) involved in the school and its work, or
> (b) keep out and leave teaching to the teachers?'

A twenty-three year old Billiluna mother, who had been working in the health clinic there and is now moving out bush to establish an outstation, said:

> "There should be teacher aides in the school so that children can understand much better in school. If they don't understand the teacher, then the teacher aide can talk to them in [their own] language. some children can't understand much."

> "Teachers speak High English and some children don't understand. Aboriginal teacher aides are good to help understanding"
> 32 year old mother, M.N., Kununurra

> "There should be someone to speak like the children so they can understand."
> 32 year old mother, E.C.Kununurra

(v) They can likewise mediate and explain if problems of communication occur between children and their parents - for example with 'notes' either from home to school or school to home.

(vi) The teaching assistant position can be used not only for liaising between teacher and child or between child and parents, but between school, parents and the general community. This would of course involve extra mural work. It may be instead of, or as well as, a liaison person.

(c) Liaison person

Many people feel there is a critical need for local liaison persons to be attached to each school in the community. These persons would be additional to teacher aides in the classrooms and would assume the last mentioned role - communication between school, teachers and parents.

> "Some mothers, they very shy you know. They'd like to see the teachers, but then again, they don't know how to say it you know; when they come to it, they wouldn't know where to start. If we had a liaising officer that would be a big help, give them that encouragement ... It should be someone from the town area - someone who knows how to talk to people, and who know people. We don't want a person favouring certain people, or talking bullshit. We want a liaising officer that can favour every people. Not a liaison officer sort of crawling to a teacher or something; we want a liaising officer that say things.
>
> 40 year old mother, northern town
> T4270

Such a position would largely involve 'trouble shooting' within the school - again a 'cultural interpretive' function to some degree, involving counselling children, teachers and parents.

> "There should be someone liaising between the school and the parents; a mature person teachers can come to for information about alcohol, no clean clothes and so on ..."
>
> N.H., mother and grandmother, central town.

K.M., Teacher Aide of Wyndam says:

> "Involve Aboriginal people in the education process"

Communities/Outstations

Secondary education on site will commence shortly at Kalumburu and at Balgo community. Turkey Creek has a small number of secondary students and so has Yiyili independent community school. At Christmas Creek, Wangkatjungka community commenced an independent secondary school in 1984. Community people see these schools as providing an opportunity to continue education for those students who do not want to leave home for a distant town at the age of twelve or thirteen. Notwithstanding the perceived need for on-site schooling, they would prefer to see the option remain for able senior students to broaden their horizons by attending a high school in the nearest town or elsewhere.

Community secondary schools should provide school/work integrated programmes and teach to a high academic standard in literacy and numeracy.

If secondary schooling is provided in the larger communities there needs to be some provision for housing outstation children with adequate supervision or, alternatively, subsidising transport in to the schools or providing an 'outreach' mobile school unit to the outstation. People suggest older teenagers and young adults could be in charge of teaching younger children under the supervision of one older man or woman, while at the same time working at their own level to become further qualified (for example through Advanced Education Certificate and General Education Certificate courses with the Western Australian College of Advanced Education).

It is extremely important that on site education in outlying communities is structured in such a way that:

1. It is an extension and expansion of community life; an agent of cultural continuity, as well as an agent of change. Community participation - in fact a feeling of community proprietorship and control - is essential to the success of community education. Resources and economy of effort should go into achieving such attitudes in communities. This is not to say that facilities should not be adequate; they should. But they should be in keeping with reality in the community rather than a copy of a city school. Yet the need is there to make children aware of their similarities with other children in towns and cities as well as proud and aware of their differences. Therefore the exercise must be planned with care and constant consultation and attention to local priorities and values. If, for example, a local priority should be a vehicle for excursions, then this must be seriously considered even if the teacher has other preferences for the use of the money available. The teachers must be prepared to sit down and learn about where community children 'are at'. People talk about the need to "start at the bottom and work at our own pace". (Kununurra) A participant in a group meeting wrote, "For training centres they shouldn't worry about age, where children are willing to go and train." (Hall's Creek)

2. Community people clearly want their children to become competent and familiar with the functions of the wider community. Therefore it is essential that standards remain high, and that attention to the detail of English language is top priority. This will as a matter of course mean taking local language differences into account in the teaching methods and materials, and in some communities teaching literacy in the local language.

POST SECONDARY, TECHNICAL AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

> "I think there should be lots of training for Aboriginal. I mean young Aboriginal. What the young Aboriginal want is a chance to prove that they can do what anybody else can do. Maybe even better."
> 24 year old Jularma. Town fringe settlement.

> "I think the biggest education worry for Aboriginal people today in the East Kimberley is with peple who have left school, because they can't even find a job, and without education you can't get a job."
> 43 year old mother N.I., of Northern Town.
> T131194

Answers to question 17 provided the following information regarding which category of people is of most concern to the Aboriginal community with regard to education needs.

TABLE 20: RESPONSES TO QUESTION 17

Category of Greatest Concern	No of Responses	Age range of Respondents
Primary students	6	20 - 70+
Secondary Students	9	16 - 38
Those who have left school	25	19 - 50+
All three	6	27 - 58

N = 46

Of 46 respondents to Q.17(a), six said that all three stages of the schooling process posed problems in the East Kimberley; pointing out that if a child did not complete adequate primary schooling, he/she was bound to meet with problems at the secondary level. Most people felt that the area listed as 'those who have left school' is the area causing most concern at present; 67 per cent of all respondents listed this category as the age group of greatest immediate concern to parents.

As the table shows, these responses were not clustered according to ages. I anticipated that parents of small children may think the trouble lay with the small children, parents of teenagers with the teenagers, and so on, but this was not so - people of all age groups were represented in each choice of category.

Senator Susan Ryan, in a speech on March 17, 1985 at Blacktown, New South Wales, made the following statement: '...if students are to learn they must be motivated, and if they are to be motivated they must see the point of what they are doing.' Many interviewees in this survey stressed this same point and noted that apathy was a big problem. A generation of young people is growing up with little education, few work prospects, and with regular unemployment benefits available, little incentive to contribute to the community by working.

> Q. What future would you like to see for this community?
>
> A. "More jobs for younger people; especially young boys. Some young boys jus' going to waste here"
>
> Community: O.N., mother, 25 years
>
> "Kids that have been sent away to high school and Pundulmurra and places like that, well the community expects more of them when they do come back - what they've learned and so on. The community didn't have any facilities for

> them to work on; the kids were expecting tools and arc welders and oxy torches so they could go for it. But there was no-one here to supervise that sort of thing. If you don't know how to handle these things you can easily blow up an oxy torch... Now they won't work; maybe because they get unemployment benefits. They've never been taught how to budget their money. This community is their community, the young people. They've got to buck in and do some of the work themselves; clean up and so on; but they feel there's no need to. But we've got youngsters here that are willing to learn, provided there's something going for them."
>
> 29 year old building worker of
> a community west of Hall's Creek

Question 45:
Last time we were here people told us that one of their worries is that when young people finish school they have nothing to do.

(a) What should they be doing?

Response: "Getting involved in community (for example, assisting their elders)."

(b) Why aren't they doing these things?

Response: "Because there isn't any encouragement"

(c) What can be done about this?

Response: "Establish Centres which will help them do it"

24 year old bilingual mother,
trainee bookkeeper, northern town

People told us there is a need for training in a wide variety of work skills in East Kimberley towns and communities. There are urgent needs in communities for employment opportunities to be created. Opportunities must be made available for people to learn within the region appropriate skills to be employed in the region if development of communities is going to progress with any degree of local involvement and self sufficiency.

The need for on-site (meaning both within communities and within the region) education facilities, is seen by respondents as particularly necessary. A large number of people in the region who left school at or before the secondary level now wish to further their education and employment skills, but are unable to live away from home for long periods of time because of lack of finance and family commitments. It was proposed that Centres should be established in communities and towns where young and older adults can further their education in a variety of areas.

A few traditional people were familiar with the functions of places of higher learning, and indicated their potential value. Others, particularly in the outlying desert communities, in discussing the pros and cons of going away for training (most interviewees and all desert group meetings stressed the need for higher education for young adults now) sometimes indicated their lack of familiarity with which level of Gadiya schooling produced what level of qualification. This demonstrates the need for more effective communication and discussion between educationists and the people themselves.

In the group meetings of this enquiry, people told us that there is a big gap of understanding between Gadiya teachers and community children and parents about each other's ways and ideas; .... parents and teachers should work together in growing up kids. These perceptions from first round meetings were restated in individual interviews.

While there may be great pride in individual children's achievements, there is an overall disillusionment with some of the products of formal education programmes. (That is, children's learning of skills.) For example, children who have spent one or more years away in schools finally return to communities still unable to translate letters, do bookwork, repair things that need repairing and so on. People sometimes feel the community has been let down by the education system, or feel that the children have failed. Such comments as the following were offered to me about children attending well-equipped East Kimberley schools doday: children attend for years, but come home to communities and "still can't read our papers or help us with our book work. They just laugh and walk away". (R.Y., Djangala, senior councillor, East Kimberley community).

The young people returning home to towns and communities have indeed grasped many mainstream concepts and skills. They have become literate at varied levels, and proficient in varied Gadiya skills, yet, we were told, find they can make no acceptable use of them in the community. The skills they have learned often are not enough to qualify them to step into the few jobs available at home. These are already occupied, usually by Gadiyas with more training or more specialised experience. The few job openings are often piecemeal and the accompanying training may be ad hoc and sometimes difficult to understand. Young people often are assigned to be trained by community employed accountants, bookkeepers, mechanics and so on, who are qualified to work in their field but not necessarily to teach. The working hours of such people are often long and the demands made upon them heavy. There is pressure on them to work for the community as well as to teach and train. Their students are young people who have left school usually without fulfilling the academic requirements necessary to undertake further education.

This situation functions at present to give a few people a few more skills. A small number of Aboriginal men and women are gaining higher levels of skills, which, provided employment opportunities arise, they could use to the benefit of themselves and their communities. The situation as it is, however, is trying for all concerned. Differences in expectations between teachers and trainees can lead to further disillusionment, loss of confidence and understanding.

"Black people get hurt easily"

commented a town Resource Centre voluntary helper, concerning frustration on both sides one afternoon when a trainee had lost heart in what was expected of him/her and gone home.

Sometimes people are nominated by communities to take part in certain courses when an opportunity arises, without the nominee being wholeheartedly committed to the particular area of study or training. Once embarked with initial goodwill on a course, a number of factors mediate against the success of such a nominee. If as well as lack of enthusiasm for the subject, he/she is ill equipped in basic literacy and material and social resources to cope with course requirements, the nominee comes under increasing pressure. This merely exacerbates the strain of having to satisfy demands which come from the community or family on the one hand, and the Gadiya teachers on the other.

A middle aged town respondent commented on the following group meeting statement,

> 'Getting trained is sometimes difficult in the Kimberleys.'

This respondent wrote:

> "People should do what they really want to do. People must be willing to learn these trades themselves, and not just agree to someone else word."

It was said in first round meetings that a lot of people would like to do some training, but some things worry them. People said some courses are:

(a) Too long if away from home.

(b) Too far away - no training/learning available or suitable in the home town/community.

(c) Too short.

(d) Not really related to the work they want to do.

(e) Teachers go too fast through the work - people haven't got time to understand properly.

(f) Often no employment at the end of school or training.

People told us that a major concern is that when young people finish school they have nothing to do. We asked respondents for comments.

> "There are no paid jobs for them, I can say that for a fact. I've heard in Broome there is some kind of taskforce thing being done at the school for unemployed school leavers. They should have one set up here. If the school leavers could go back there, even if they're paid unemployment rates or something, just to have someone skilled there to learn them a trade of different types. For example my son went to Perth - he didn't do mechanics I don't think; there could be a mechanics class there; bricklaying - which they'll pay to have done

now - my sons going to do that, he never did that in high school. Fencing course - they don't do that in Perth.

"My son's big aim was to go and do a community development course or even work part time anywhere, helping the communities and when he gets some kind of certificate he'd go back and work with my tribe ...."

35 year old Hall's Creek mother 342291

"Yes; right now they are getting drunk cause they have got no jobs to do other than getting drunk also there is hardly any jobs around."

R.Y. Djabidja, 20 years old.
Trainee project officer, Kununurra

"There's nothing to amuse them in Wyndham, or keep them busy - no jobs available. The shire should create jobs so young boys can be employed even if just for the day so kids get money every day for doing a little bit of job. It might help to stop them depending on unemployment benefits. It's been done before. What about C.E.P.?"

44 year old town mother, Wyndham

"They should be encouraged by teacher and parent to enter the workforce or a college. Kids are not doing those things because they are not being motivated to do these things.

"There should be a person go round to the school at the end of the year and encourage these young people to better themselves. And tell them that they can do it as they are just as good as the next person, to keep an interest in the young people's employment-to-be situation so these young people will know that someone cares for them to better themselves. This goes for the parents and teachers as well. What is needed is motivation and encouragement."

27 year old town office worker, Kununurra

"They have nothing to do because they have not learned the necessary skills to secure employment in his/her community, whether they be academic or practical. Education should be aimed at community needs."

25 year old town father, Wyndham

"After they finish school [a lot of kids] go to Pundulmurra to try to learn some sort of skill there. Some of them end up getting a drivers' licence, some don't. They learn to do this and that and when they come back there's no jobs here waiting for them. Or if

> there's a job it usually goes to whoever's the closest friend to the other person that left. I shouldn't say this but no-one's ever (full blood people I mean) got in to community welfare - they've only had trainees for a couple of months and they don't stay on. There should be full blood people, not only all the half castes training up in Resource Centres, too. They should have older people as well. That's what I said about the language centre too."
>
> Trilingual 'half-caste' town mother,
> 38 years old T371070

> "The young boys could be learning a trade like saddlery, carpentry, mechanics, clockwork. The young girls could do likewise, dressmaking, cooking, nursing. They need the unemployment benefits - I mean they gotta get some income, if there's no work. I mean not all of them are lazy, but some of them they go and work for a while and then they pull out. There's a lot of problems.
>
> "A Centre is needed and teachers."
>
> 36 year old mother, Hall's Creek
> T371070

All the parents we spoke to wanted their kids to grow up the right way, to be able to look after their family and help in the community. Young men and women too want to be able to run their own show. People in all communities have said to us that Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley need a good education and training in different kinds of work.

These viewpoints were expressed in the first round meetings. We asked people to elaborate on this in individual interviews, probing for specific information with a number of questions, for example:

46. What kinds of work could a young Aboriginal person do here if he had the right training?

    What kinds of training or learning can a person do already in this community?

    What future would you like to see for this community/outstation/ Aboriginal people in this town?

    What plans has the community got for this place?

The adjoining list of suggested training needs (Table 22) was assembled from the answers to these questions.

Suggestions to remedy these sorts of problems were sought in this enquiry. The main thrust was, as stated at the commencement of this chapter, on-site education:

- Schools - a two-way approach.

TABLE 21: SUGGESTED TRAINING NEEDS: POST SECONDARY, TECHNICAL AND TERTIARY

	T	C	O
Accounting	x		x
Administrator	x	x	
Adult literacy	x	x	x
Alcoholic problems	x	x	
Bakery		x	
Band	xf	x	
Bookkeeping	x	x	x
Bricklayers	x		
Bridging Courses to enter gen stud.	x		
Building			x
Camp nurse			x
Carpentry	x	x	x
Community development	x		
Concrete work	xf		
Cooking in kitchen	x	x	
Driving		x	
Electrician	x		
Farming	x		
Fitter and turner	x		
Health worker	x	x	
Homemaker skills		x	x
Housebuilding	x	x	x
Language worker	x	x	x
Labourer	xf		
Leather work	x	x	x
Legal aid		x	
Liaison officer	x		
Machine operator			
Maintenence (buildings etc)	x	x	x
Management in communities			
Mechanic	x	x	x
Mining worker	x		x
Mother craft	x		
Music	x		x
Office work	x		
Nursing	x		x
Painting (buildings)	xf		
Painting and drawing		x	
Plumbing	x	x	x
Police aide	x		
Post office	x		
Powerhouse work		x	
Project officer	x	x	x
Radio operator		x	x
Ranger	x		
Recreation worker (with kids)	x	x	
Saddlery	x		
Sewing		x	x
Shop assistant	x		
Social work	x		
Sports	x		
Stockwork	x	x	x
Storekeeper		x	
Traditional training	xf		
Teacher aide	xf	x	
Teacher training	x	x	x
Typing	x	x	
Welding	x		
Welfare aide	x		

T - Town, f - Fringe
C - Community
O - Outstation

x indicates need was suggested in this location, whether by one or more respondents.

- Community Centres catering for adult (young and older) needs in literacy, technical and trades training, art and cultural persuits and recreation.

- Tertiary institution in the region; a community college for the whole community, with provision for teaching about the Aboriginal aspects of the region.

People said that they would like a Centre within their community where people could have the opportunity to upgrade their level of education in areas such as:

accounting and bookkeeping
Aboriginal language and culture
literacy in English and in Aboriginal languages
mechanics
building
carpentry
leatherwork
hairdressing
sewing
music
art.

The idea was put forward that where there are local people with appropriate skills, they should be employed as teachers/trainers and trained on the job to upgrade their work status.

An eighteen year old bilingual respondent, N.T., Djimidj, asked us where he could further his interest in music and said his ambition is to teach music to other people and to develop the Muriny Patha outstation at Maralam. He was enthusiastic about the possibilities of such a Centre and noted that it should be Aboriginal, because if too many Gadiyas were there people would be, 'sheim' (shame), that is, embarrassed. (T42204)

In the words of 20 year old R.Y., of the Djabidja skin, labourer and Resource Centre worker, such a Centre would:

> "help the staff and the community out a lot, help younger people out, and get more ideas from other people."

People feel the need for such facilities is urgent.

> "For training centres, they shouldn't worry about age, where children are willing to go and train."

> "After secondary it should be compulsory to learn a trade before leaving school."
> Town group meeting 14.4.85

A father in a small community one hundred and fifty kilometres from the nearest town told of his fears for his sixteen year old son in this isolated place:

> "Kids should get into some sort of training as soon as they finish school so they may get a job when they get a bit older. Now, things is the other way. Most of these kids never went through any course after they left school. That's the most important thing. Training."

This father asked for my advice. He knew of no possibilities for his son.

> "My boy's about 16 now. Would he be able to get in a course? See when they come back they got nothing to do here, there's nothing for them to do. If they was on higher education, more training, they wouldn't be able to run out of jobs. Like it is now, you bring 'em back here - I've seen a lot of it now - big mob of ours up here, just gone to waste. There's nothing to do and mostly they get on to alcohol. Most of them are alcoholic."
>
> KT122195

The establishment of the "St John's Academy" at Balgo has provided the physical basis in this settlement for the sort of "community centre" or "community learning place" which nearly all town and settlement communities talked about and are keen to see developed, although not necessarily on a religious denominational basis. People see the setting up of such centres in towns and communities as providing opportunities for local people to become involved in both employment and in training in such occupations as teaching, mechanics, art and so on. In addition to providing opportunities for young people, such centres might offer a variety of skills for older people - the most often quoted of which is literacy.

A councillor at Balgo described the changeover from Government school to Catholic school and the establishment of the Adult Cultural and Education Centre "St John's Academy".

> "Well long time ago we had a Government school[1] here, Government school was going along alright; we used to stop in the community. We go along with Government school OK. Then the people got together when Father Hevern along with his church council brought up the idea of a Catholic school. At first we had big argument amongst ourselves. People went halves.
>
> "What they said was - Father Hevern and his councillors - save our children going down to Nulungu College in Broome we have them here. Other people agreed to that, saying alright, that's good, we'll have our own school here. They will enlarge the school up - woodwork,

---

[1] Even earlier, a Catholic nun taught children at 'old Balgo' mission.

> metalwork, little bit of room there for the linguist bloke - like we was saying we don't want to lose our language, and our culture. We can have a little (room?) set up in the school for that too. We'll have our own Teachers Aide, girl from down the camp, to teach the young ones, linguist there too, that's what Father Hevern pointed out, and old people said alright that's really good. Learn the Gadiya way, and learn the Blakbala way too. Yuwayi, the meeting went for one whole day, didn't finish that day .... came back the next morning - more rows - all settled down and then people all agreed for Catholic school.
>
> "At the Adult Training Centre [if] older people like me and B--- here want to learn more, we go over there.
>
> "... in Broome students kind of get worried down there; when it comes to Easter all the students from all over the place go back to their own homeland; where we; they transfer us somewhere else, like to La Grange, One Arm Point, anywhere. Too far to come back home at Easter ... we had some kids just came out of school now and they said they don't want to go to school down in Broome. They want to stay here and go to the Adult Centre, which they been doing. They want to feel more to themselves and at home. Rather than Broome; too far; they're getting too worried. Right now those ones at Nulungu are pretty happy - people from here go up to Hall's Creek [260 kilometres away] and call them on the phone; it keeps them going."
>
> KT102140

In this comunity Teacher Aides working in the school spend time regularly at the Adult Centre (St. John's Academy) completing assignments towards Advanced Education Certificate and General Education Certificate courses through Mount Lawley College of Advanced Education. The Centre is also a base for mother tongue Kukatja speakers who, together with a qualified linguist, are producing literacy materials. Traditional artists are beginning to use the Centre as a base and there are homecraft facilities also available for teaching western style cooking and sewing.[1]

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[1] The Centre is not without its problems. It appears that funding is insufficient to provide an income for the Aboriginal Kukatja literacy workers without whose essential skills the documentation of Kukatja and production of literacy materials for use in the two-way school programme could not proceed. The programme is also lacking adequate audio visual equipment which would allow a much more comprehensive approach to documentation of all material.

> "[Centre la tauwn;] we'd like that. More klos; wi kin treining deya; grownap pipul dey wanum. Niya det olmidjin, ai siinum det [Karriyili] skul. Ai laik tu teigum dis pipul burrum hiya luk det pleis, yuno."
> *"[A Centre in town;] we'd like that. We could do training courses close by then. Adults would like it. I've seen that school [Karriyili Adult Literacy Centre] near the Old Mission in Fitzroy. I'd like to take these people from here to see that place in Fitzroy Crossing."*
> Djuburru; chairman Lundja community,
> Hall's Creek KT152503

> "I reckon older women would like to do weaving and that sort of thing, and some of them'd like to write their name. There's a lot of young girls that went away schooling that could be used in that area."
> R.I. young father, Kununurra
> T151028

> "Well I'm D------ B----. I just want to say a few words about our Adult School, big people school; to have it down here in Malan, so we can have our own class for the grown ups. I've been schooling in Balgo mission a long time ago, and I want to learn more. I want to try to help all the other people to learn to read and write."
> Senior woman; Group meeting at Malan,
> Lake Gregory KT91171

In nearly every community people talked about a community learning place where grown up people could learn to read and write, as well as participate in other courses. At Malan we were told Government assistance had been sought for such a place for three years. Older men and women showed interest not only in literacy, but suggested bookkeeping, sewing, cooking in a kitchen, leatherwork and so on. In some towns and communities some attempts have been made to initiate courses in some of these areas, meeting with varied success. In such ventures it is imperative that Aboriginal as well an non-Aboriginal people be involved on the teaching end of the enterprise and that courses are in congenial, familiar and friendly surroundings.

In Kununurra the Assembly of God Church group conducts a thriving literacy class of 12 or more adults, mostly men, who meet daily for intensive instruction. This group was keen and felt discriminated against by funding bodies. The only such enterprises in the East Kimberley in any way on-going and well attended are denominational Christian Church organised. These groups appear to have good rapport with their adherents and are performing a much needed public service. A secular education even in such basic forms as adult literacy is not available. It seems that the options for adults wishing to become literate in most towns and communities are to do so through a church group or not at all. Some church groups are strongly and openly anti-traditional Aboriginal culture; this of course is not conducive to traditional people joining literacy classes conducted by these particular groups.

When asked where he/she would go for information about education, possible training or courses, not one respondent named TAFE. Most nominated the schoolteacher, the Catholic sister (sometimes the same person) or Commonwealth Department of Education officer in Kununurra who was well known through the Aboriginal Secondary Grants Scheme. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations representative in Kununurra was nominated by some Kununurra respondents and one community respondent.

Recreation Needs

The importance of a community centre in the form of an Adult Cultural and Learning Centre extends not only to learning for employment, but to learning for personal enrichment and for leisure. This was made clear in relation to adult needs, but there were particular references to the compelling need to provide interests and outlets for the youth of the region. Throughout the region interest was expressed in the growth of Aboriginal music. Traditional and modern music, whether secular or religious, is as important as story telling and an integral part of family life in the East Kimberley today. Many young people aspire to be in a music group. An appreciable number are already proficient in playing guitar and a number of interesting developments in traditional/folk music are taking place in the region.

Twenty nine year old respondent N.T. of a community 120 kilometres from the nearest town spoke of the changing social scene and the gap between young and old. He spoke about the possible role of television and video either negatively in contributing to the breakdown of traditional culture in communities or positively as a means of maintaining it by communicating and recording culture, myths and stories.

> "In the next couple of years you're going to have satellites, eh. You're going to have TV station, you're going to have video machines. This is the question a lot of people ask. What's going to happen to the lifestyle of the true native of Australia? There's going to be a big difference between the young generation and the old generation .. y'know they're into Coco Cola, denim jeans, discos ... but I must say blokes round here my age and even younger still carry out their duties, in ceremonies; but it's only now and then. See those things [Coco Cola, jeans and all that] are produced day to day in life whereas ceremonies are 11 months apart for a period of up to a month or two. It's a different thing if they were practised day to day, every day. Then the child will pick it up - ceremonies I mean.
>
> "You can't go to everyone's house and pull TV out of their house and say you're not watching

> TV tonight. Like tonight there's videos. But it'll be a different thing if they'd record something on video, of ceremonies; or if the ABC TV or something could have a section on culture.
>
> T44059

The following excerpts are from a longer statement about community centres by a Kununurra town Resource Centre committee member. He maintained that when you put up a Community Centre, you've got to be careful not to lose contact with groups; they should all be involved. In the timing, the placing of the building and the people consulted, you have to take care it isn't seen as belonging to one particular group. He described his ideas of a community centre, and referred to one such place he had seen in a capital city:

> "If a community centre is built it should be on a par with the new housing. There should be input from the town people, because the town people want to go to that sort of thing. Then we can hold things there, night classes and stuff like that, and then the reserve people could come to the place too ... it's like a meeting place in a sense. [We don't want to lose the support of any group]. I think there should be a really good sit down and talk about it. A Community Centre's the thing. We're just lost without that. You're lost without a meeting place, you know.
>
> "... a meeting place, where you can sit down, have a cuppa tea, talk, have a meeting, collect ideas from people, its just a goer you know, especially with young people. At the moment in Kununurra there's nothing. Nothing for young kids, nothing. There's no sense saying why are they getting into trouble all the time ... there's nothing else for them.
>
> "I reckon older women would like to do weaving and that sort of thing, and some of them'd like to write their name. There's a lot of young girls that went away schooling that could be used in that area, 'stead of doing nothing.
>
> "Well, we tell kids to go to school and get taught up and learned all these things - but they come back to Kununurra and can't use any of that; so some of the older women say "why send your kids away if they're just going to come back and go on the dole?
>
> "Well a hall ... a garage would be a sort of an offshoot of it. Like - you've got to have a main hall area, and an office in there. You can have youth activities stuff, you can have games, you know, table tennis stuff and

pool table. You'd have it partitioned off for meetings, hiring out - you could hire the whole hall out, even to Gadiyas. You must keep the standard of the hall up to a standard where everybody's quite happy to go down there and enjoy themselves. You've got to have some sort of ground where everyone can sit down and talk to one another.

"Once you've got a hall there's no stopping - like, with old people, fundraising, everything. There is a shire hall in this town but its too big. If there was a decent smaller hall around - most groups round here are only small groups and only need a small hall - it could be hired out and cost less money.

"It's got to have functions too - where we can hold Aboriginal dances; we don't have - there's nothing except the pub for kids.

"Dancing; music instruments; so many kids get taught so much at school, but they can't go home and learn any more because they haven't got any. But if the instruments could be passed on say, they could come round to the hall at night and play and learn more and learn music properly.

"We've talked to CAAMA[1] about the possibility of having people come and have sessions with kids, teach kids; but you have to have a situation where you can teach kids.

"I've seen a place like this in .... Where you've got one big hall, on the side are the toilets and a kiosk and a couple of little offices on the corner of it and then the whole area is just open space. You can run a concertina type partition thing that opens in the middle so things can go on in a half or a quarter or the full [space]. And outside there was body building and weights.

"And motor vehicle maintenance ... where people booked themselves in to fix their car up. They'd get the parts, pay ... whatever it is to come and use the tools and they're responsible to put all the tools back and clean up after they've finished and fixed their car up; a community garage. There was a mechanic there who knew how to relate to people.

---

[1] Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association based in Alice Springs.

> "I've been to places where there's Aboriginals running the whole Aboriginal show; a whole stack of Aboriginal people looking really well, and dancing and policing themselves. If other Aboriginal people are policing them then the pressure will be on from there."
>
> T150024

Respondent N.T. then, (see full quotation Recreation Needs, p.153) noted the potential of video and television as a medium of cultural maintenance. Speaking of the community in which he is living and working as a building project worker, he said:

> "Blokes my age and even younger round here [are] still carrying out their duties in ceremonies. But it's only now and then..."

In contrast, he noted, the influence of western culture was everyday, all the time. He suggested, as a strategy to counter this pervading influence, the making of videos of Aboriginal ceremonies and customs, say:

> "It'd be education in one sense - a different style from what the old blokes been teaching, but it'd be there, as a catalogue, on the library shelf. You can take it out, and plug it in."
>
> T44070

This speaker thus makes several important points.

1. He noted that young adults still do take part in ceremonies. Other speakers from this community confirmed the vitality of traditions among older community members and described community participation in initiation ceremonies of young boys today.[1]

2. He noted that nevertheless the western influence is increasingly strong, and is bringing about changes in thinking and attitudes. He made the point that eventually young people growing up may become intolerant of the old ways and want to go the western way, yet due to intermittent schooling, language problems, attitudinal factors and so on as discussed in this report, are ill equipped to do so. He suggests later in his interview that many Aboriginal parents are "bucking up against the system itself" (T46030) yet what, the young ask, can the old offer to the children? (T46090).

3. He feels that the school is in a strong position to help prevent the young from "falling down in the middle," and that there

> "should be more relationships formed up with the parent and teacher, to make it easier for the child ... you rarely see Aboriginal parents having any communication with the teacher ..."
>
> (T46120ff).

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[1] This community was one in which local school teachers I met told me "These people know nothing about traditional ceremonies or customs."

One strategy to bring about better communication between home and school he suggests is school excursions; amalgamate school learning with old people's teaching about traditional knowledge in this way. Involve parents; gain trust.

4. He suggests in the above quotation the value of video to research and record traditional information. Training of local people in the techniques of video has potential educational, recreational and cultural value.

The possible development of community centres in each town and major settlement was a much discussed topic in both group and individual talks. Ideas as to the functions of such centres usually clustered around three themes:

(a) further education for young people who have left school;
(b) adult education (literacy, sewing, cooking and a variety of other subjects);
(c) recreation and cultural activity (for example, sport, music, language and traditional recording, history): meeting place and drop-in centre; a place to hold dances, discos, functions and so on.

Educational Excursions; Study Trips

During the course of discussions reference was sometimes made by respondents to education endeavours in towns or communities other than their own which had excited their interest. People expressed interest in visiting such places to see exactly what they did and how they operated. At Lundja Community for example, near Hall's Creek, senior councillors suggested that as they need to raise the standard of literacy in the community, perhaps a school for adult people could "get up", like the one they had heard about in Fitzroy. The suggestion of a visit to see it was made. In Kununurra a respondent who had visited the Kriol school in Bamyili commented that such schooling may be seen to be relevant to some children in the Kimberley region, if only people knew about it. The few people who had either seen Batchelor College Darwin or attended it, held that courses there are very relevant to the Kimberley scene; the suggestion was made more than once that people would like to see and hear about education programmes in other places. People who had been away themselves and seen other possibilities often were those who had a comprehensive and practical view of local needs and the relevance of particular strategies to achieve an improved local education.

Several groups talked about making trips to look at other schemes in other places, for example to the:

Karriyili school in Fitzroy Crossing;[1]
the three-way Independant school at Yiyili;
the bilingual school at Balgo;
Batchelor College near Darwin;
the bilingual schools in the northern territory.

The level of local participation and interest can be greatly enhanced and the setting up of any such schemes facilitated if the local population is well informed about the possibilities and the realities of what can be achieved. Study tours to visit existing education institutions are in themselves not just educational, they are essential if the level of community awareness of what can be achieved and the realities of how are to be raised.

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[1] See for example quote on Adult Literacy, p.152.

Participation in the development of education projects

Almost without exception respondents answering 22(a) and 26(b) indicated that either they themselves or someone in their family would be interested in either teaching or in some way helping at such a Community Cultural Learning Centre, or at a tertiary college in the region.

> "I'd like to help in courses, if there'd be anybody here running part-time courses, for older people, working with them, writing their names, learning how to write their names, or learning how to sew, all the woman, sewing with patterns y'know, I'd like to help if they had a little school you know, for the older people, or they can work in the classroom there in school, evening classes. Now they only have it in Fitzroy, Karriyili school.
>
> 26 year old mother,
> community west of Hall's Creek

The potential for such involvement is high. In many communities there are young adult people with secondary education and sometimes several years working experience who would be interested in work in the community, but who cannot, due to family commitments, go elsewhere looking for work.

A TERTIARY INSTITUTION IN THE EAST KIMBERLEY

> "If kids keep going till they've finished school and there's a college up here, they could go to that and then get better educated and go straight into a job, teaching or nursing or anything like that. A college up here would help a lot. My sister wants to be a teacher. Something like Pundulmurra would be good, and something higher.
>
> "What I want is proper high standard where people get in not because they are Aboriginal but because they've got the qualifications. That's what I'd like, but you need the other kind as well, like Pundulmurra."
>
> 17 year old nursing student, Wyndham

Although many people were unclear as to what level of training one could expect from the schools, they were very sure of what sorts of training are needed in the region. Two types of institutions are envisaged. One is a small scale 'Community Place' for learning, training and cultural/recreational activities in each major community. Whether all under one roof or not, the concept is clear and the areas of need clearly articulated:

(a) training in a variety of areas related to the development of self sufficiency in the communities, as well as

(b) several areas of education for enrichment, and

(c) education for leisure.

Details of the needs suggested by respondents can be found in Table 22. The other type of institution suggested is a place in the Kimberley region where people could learn such things as nursing, teaching and so on.

In the town schools and some Community schools, teacher aides tend to be married with families, people who are not in a position to uproot and migrate to a capital city or distant town to complete the required training. These people showed a lot of interest in the possibilities which could open up if a tertiary institution were to be established in the East Kimberleys. Several noted that even then, unless it were in their town, they would still not be in a position to attend daily, and that they would be most interested in a scheme where they were in contact with such a centre from their home town and could attend in person full time for short blocks of perhaps two weeks at intervals throughout their course.

> "It's a pity they couldn't start off an institution up here, or a college up here - look at Rum Jungle, Batchelor College - it's in the environment. Aboriginal people can walk in there, take a degree in teaching.. you got to have it so close that they can get away from there, for a weekend or something [so] they're not shut off, a long way from home ... I'd say there'd be a big interest in it [up here]."
>
> N.T., 29 year old State Housing worker,
> South West community T442131

Such a college would need to be residential, this interviewee noted, and central to the many communities of the Eastern region. Like a number of other community and outstation speakers he suggested that Hall's Creek would be a suitable place - central in the Kimberley region itself, 'not far' from many communities, not cut off in the Wet, and not too far from Kununurra, yet distant enough to minimise social distractions for students. A number of townspeople from the two northern towns suggested Kununurra as the most suitable place for such an institution.

In the second round of interviews these suggestions about tertiary education were re-presented to the interviewees with the question "What do you think of this idea?" Some answers were as follow:

> "It would create a better awareness of Aboriginal problems, have a better understanding."
>
> 25 year old, town father, teaching aide

> "Wat dis pleis oba iya burrum Darwin disaid? Larning pleis; burrum Darwin yuno ..

> Batchelor, yeah; dey treinum deya. Ai rekin meigum treining pleis iya; better den go longwei."
> *What's that place south of Darwin, that education place out of Darwin you know? Batchelor; yes, they train people there. I think it would be better if we had a training place here so that people don't have to go so far away.*
> 70 year old, fringe settlement chairman
> T61403

> "There should be a community college as I said! It's needed."
> 40 year old, fringe settlement mother

> "It is a very good idea; we want some of our people to learn."
> 18 years community teacher aide

SUMMARY

Summing up, two types of further education centres were suggested as strategies to improve education opportunities in the region. (a) Community Learning Centres such as are feasible in the long term as extensions of existing resource centres or the Kimberley Language Resource Centre, and (b) a tertiary college. This might be established under the auspicies of relevant Commonwealth and State government funding and planning authorities. At present there appears to be little TAFE presence in the East Kimberley to service the Aboriginal communities.

The idea of a college in the Kimberleys, where adults could learn, was brought up in all localities as a strategy to enable young adults to train and enter the workforce within the region.

> "Main priority we want to try to run our own affairs; look after ourself ... I'm interested in young people; - very much. I'd like to see them go to college, train to be administrators and electricians, and builders. So we can have our own builders ... We'll set up communities that will be established in the future; so there'll be lots of little places - like Yagga Yagga and this place - or this mob Billiluna got another little community, so that'll be 3 - 4 places in the area. Well, in the future, [that's] what we're looking at. Maybe one day there'll be a community college in Balgo.."
> Leader, Yunbu KT91323

Some Aboriginal people in the group meetings of the first round of discussions suggested as above that there should be a place in the Kimberley where courses are given for adult people, and where seminars can be held. It was suggested that there is a need for a college where people could learn and study when they have left school. People suggested that a place like this might:

(a) train translators and interpreters;

(b) develop and provide language courses (for Aboriginal people and white people);

(c) train teachers;

(d) have trades courses;

(e) give short seminars to people about Aboriginal culture;

(f) find out about Kimberley Aboriginal culture and language.

Aboriginal people should be employed as staff in such an institute, particularly in the development of Aboriginal language and cultural courses, lectures, and so on. To the suggested list (a) to (f) of possible teaching functions of such a college, interviewees added community development courses and welfare courses.

PART 4

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

"Black men and women can teach the Gadiya; black and white people should work side by side in the school."

Grandfather, fringe community

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CHAPTER 10: PRIORITY STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

THE RANGE OF ISSUES

In the view of East Kimberley Aboriginal respondents in this survey certain areas have high priority for action.

In discussing now East Kimberley perceptions of which education issues which should be given highest priority, it is useful for the reader to have some idea of the range of issues brought to the fore in this survey. Some of them were mentioned by only a few people (for example homework difficulties) but indicate perceived needs and so are included. Others came up again and again - such as non-attendance at schools - and were elaborated on by many people. Factors are often interrelated (for example non-attendance and health).

Table 22 lists topics isolated early in the analysis of survey material and gives an indication of the breadth of thinking by respondents on the matter of education.

While the scope of perceived significant factors is broad, four issues emerged as urgent. Three of them were brought to our attention during initial group meetings. Discussion in the second-round interviews pointed to the fourth area of major significance, that of recreation.

As explained elsewhere, those concerns most often expressed in most localities are taken as evidence of what people see as priority needs in the region as a whole. Areas of concern expressed frequently in first round talks were further explored in the second round interviews. Many strategies for change were suggested, and a variety of attitudes expressed. This led to confirmation or rejection, qualification and/or extension of first round data.

THE PRIORITIES

The following emerged as priorities in developing more effective education for the East Kimberley region:

PRIORITY I: TEACH AND INFORM GADIYAS (EUROPEANS) ABOUT THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE REGION

There is a need for people who intend to work and/or live in the East Kimberley region to be well informed about the Aboriginal population. Study courses are recommended and should comprise information about lifestyles and living conditions today, as well as history, languages and tradition.

(a) Provide courses for teachers intending to teach in the region.

(b) Involve traditional people.

(c) Employ and train more Aboriginal teachers, teacher aides, liaison workers.

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TABLE 22: SOME OF THE FACTORS AND ISSUES PERCEIVED AS SIGNIFICANT BY EAST KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION IN THE REGION

Adult Education
Alcohol
Attitudes General
Att. to schools incl. outstation
Being taken away for schooling
Beliefs
Change
Coloured kids being taken away
Community Centre
Control of Education
Curriculum
Customs and values
Differences N to S
Differences Town/Community
Distance
Economic and General future
Education structures and strategies
Gadiyas - education of
Health
Homework classes
Identity
Jobs
Language
Law
Manners
Mobility
Music
Night Courses
Outstations
Parent Background
Post year 10 courses

Prejudice
Priorities
Problems general
Purpose of Education
Reasons for Secondary School
Relationships (Kin)
Schooling
School Board
School, Changing schools
Schools, present
School Catholic versus State
Schools reasons for choice of
School - wanting own school
Strategies in schools
Strategies general
Switching
Teachers, teacher aides
Teachers growling
Teacher turnover
Tertiary Education
Traditional Education
Training
Training facilities in the community
Training institution in Kimberleys
Truancy/Liaison Officer/ dropping out
Unemployment benefits
Use of skin terms
Youth club, activities
Unemployment benefits
Use of skin terms
Youth club, activities

(d) Mix and communicate (sporting and cultural functions, use of print, audio and visual media).

PRIORITY II: IMPROVE STANDARD AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH LEVELS; ACKNOWLEDGE AND PROVIDE FOR DIVERSE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

(a) The urgent need to improve levels of competence in the Standard English of Aboriginal students of the region will necessitate:

(1) recognition by Government not only of the existence and vitality of the traditional languages of the region, but teaching of and/or about them; and

(2) recognition of the existence, ubiquity and uses of Kimberley Creole, a dialect of Kriol, the lingua franca used across the Top End of the continent by an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 speakers. This will require efforts to:

(i) research and record traditional languages and Kriol through Language Centres;

(ii) involve traditional language speakers in education; and

(iii) develop curricula for teachers' colleges and for schools.

(b) Develop and implement a two-way or bicultural policy for education in the region.

This will mean a new approach in Government schools, with the aim of acknowledging the biculturalism of the region and specifically of the Aboriginal student population.

(1) Develop and provide two-way education programmes in fringe settlements and outlying communities and outstations where requested.

(2) Localise curricula used so that core areas include and make use of information about Aboriginal languages and culture of the region. This should be implemented at primary and secondary levels under the supervision of traditional Aboriginal knowledge holders. Curricula to be developed through Language Centres. (See Priority II (2) iii).

PRIORITY III : PROVIDE ON-SITE EDUCATION

(a) primary - in every community; establish small primary schools on site in outstations and small settlements where requested, with biculturalism as their aim. (See II a).

(b) secondary - in towns and communities, broaden options; develop school/work integrated programmes.

(c) high school and post high school skills, job training and jobs; technical and tertiary education - in the region.

PRIORITY IV : RECREATION NEEDS; EDUCATION FOR LEISURE

These four emerged as regional priorities. The order in which they are stated is my perception of their perceived importance as indicated to me through the meetings and interviews. However, all would agree that each need listed is a major one and that all are interrelated.

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES:

In these four major areas of suggested change, details of proposed strategies are considered under the following headings:

Priority need

Primary strategy suggested to address this need

Specific strategies of implementation.

PRIORITY I : TEACH AND INFORM GADIYAS ABOUT THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE REGION

The conviction that it is important for Europeans to understand more fully the Aboriginal position and to slow down and listen to Aboriginal viewpoints and to Aboriginal information was implicit in most responses. There is a need for Europeans, specifically those involved in administrative decisions which affect the lives of Aboriginal people and those working and or living in the region, to be well informed about the Aboriginal population.

Q 14(a) Should European teachers/other government workers learn about Aboriginal lifestyles before they begin work in an Aboriginal community?

> "I think it's a necessity really. How - how can you learn to work with people if you don't know anything about them? This has been a big fault all along I think. There's always that er - impression that ' *we're gonna teach them our way;* ' the Gadiya way. But they come up against a brick wall time and time again, because there's just no understanding between the teacher and the students...
> [There's] the language barrier; misunderstandings on both sides. If you're talking about the teacher, the teacher doesn't understand the person he's teaching - you see it all the time. There's no understanding about the Aboriginal people - their culture, everything."
>
> M.D.T352011

PRIMARY STRATEGY SUGGESTED TO ADDRESS PRIORITY I:

Teach and inform Gadiyas about the Aboriginal people of the region:

People feel that it is essential that newcomers to the Kimberley region learn about and become familiar with the region's people. Strategies to bring this about depend on greater involvement of Aboriginal people and regular interaction between the two groups.

Responses to question 16(b), and questions 22 - 24 contributed ideas on strategies for effecting change at the local level, particularly in discussions of statements heading questions 14, 16 and 17.

On a broad level, while some two or three townspeople remarked that the opportunity was there for Aboriginal children to learn about their culture in their own time from the old Aboriginal people in the region, and that Europeans likewise could learn informally the same way, most respondents; young and old alike, whether traditional or western oriented in customs and outlook, indicated that they felt this was not enough. On a broad scale, respondents felt there is in fact a need not only for all Aboriginal children, or all Kimberley children, but for all

Australian children to have the chance to learn something about Aboriginal languages and culture at school.

Thus virtually all participants indicated the following to be the ideal situation:

> All Australian children should have the chance to learn something about Aboriginal languages and culture at school.

Ways and means of bringing this about will differ with the situation.

The following strategies are suggested to bring about a more general understanding of the Aboriginal situation within the region. Strategies concern both adults and children, but tend to aim first at knowledge exchange at the adult level.

SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY I:

(a) Provide courses for teachers and others intending to work in the region.

Intercultural problems could be alleviated if teachers and other newcomers to the region's workforce - nurses, doctors, welfare workers and so on - had access to information about the indigenous population through training before coming to the region and induction when they arrive in the region.

(1) Training courses before coming to the region.

Courses in linguistic and multicultural aspects of life in the East Kimberley today should be set up for intending migrant workers before they transfer to the region. Such courses must be planned carefully and should involve Aboriginal lecturers with real and relevant knowledge of the region.

(2) Induction when they arrive in the region.

Strategies suggested to implement this fell broadly into two categories - formal learning, and informal learning.

2.1 Formal: There should be an institution in the Kimberley region at which Aboriginal staff could provide courses, training and seminars for Europeans coming to the Kimberley to work in Aboriginal communities. This idea was put forward to us first by a group meeting of western oriented townpeople at Wyndham; it was also suggested in communities and outstations.

Informal: If they wish to find out things, teachers should go into the community and talk with people, show interest and ask the old people.

Further suggestions were:

2.2 Such courses should involve local Aboriginal expertise.
Wyndham

2.3 Such courses could be combined with visits to communities and discussions with people there. Malan

2.4 New teachers should have a two-week orientation period during which the community could meet with them and familiarise them with the local lifestyle and local problems. Hall's Creek

2.5 There should be a period of overlap between outgoing and incoming teachers, so that new teachers could be introduced to the children, the parents and the school affairs by the outgoing teacher.
Krungal, Christmas Creek

(b) Involve traditional people.

(1) Involve people with a traditional background in induction courses; as previously stated:

- In teacher-education courses offered at the Western Australian College of Advanced Education

- In 1-2 week induction courses for incoming teachers in the region, both at a tertiary centre and/or in each community where there is a school. Consult local Aboriginal people on how to implement, fund and organise.

(2) Involve more traditional teachers in schoolwork:

Implementation must be by regular, continued consultation of educators, planners and policy makers with the community. That is this should take place essentially at the regional and community level, school principals and teachers consulting the Aboriginal people of the region and acting on their advice as to who to involve and how.

This must be done through such avenues as:

(a) Aboriginal Resource Centres (Ngoonjuwah, Balangarri, Warringarri) as these are grass roots organisations working on behalf of and under the direction of communities;

(b) traditional community councils and school committees which speak with the authority of community consensus; and

(c) ACOE groups if these are yet formed and if they have adequate community representation.

People want to be involved in traditional education. This already occurs informally - it happens anyway at weekends and after school, but must be to some extent in schools too. Gadiya teachers must realise and accept this and also realise that as they are not qualified to do so they are not expected to teach on traditional matters, but to help manage the class when required, co-operate, and show solidarity with the traditional teacher.

Traditional teachers should be chosen by the community. Respondents everywhere felt that senior people with traditional knowledge ought to be involved in traditional education together with and through the school.

This does not necessarily mean that teaching should be within the physical borders of the school. People felt that to be effective traditional matters and the teaching of language is better done on excursions, in such an environment that visual and practical demonstrations can be given.

It is offered as a cooperative strategy to bring the teaching staff and the community closer together.

It is an offer of direct and expert knowledge on traditional matters to school students regardless of background, (that is, it might involve Gadiya children too), and an offer of the opportunity for non-Aboriginal school teachers to participate and learn something of the background and beliefs of the Aboriginal families whose children they teach.

Structure: Traditional teachers may prefer to work outside of the classrooms; this requires resources - for example, school vehicle, petrol, other basic equipment.

Curriculum: Traditional curriculum should be worked out in each community under the instructions of and in consultation with traditional teachers.

Staff:
1. Paid traditional teachers, teachers' aides and/or Aboriginal teachers.
2. The role of non-Aboriginal staff should be discussed.
3. Later follow up written work in conjunction with WACAE trained Aboriginal and/or European staff.

(c) Employ and train more Aboriginal teachers, teaching assistants and liaison workers.

The presence of local Aboriginal people on staff in education institutions can mean a degree of localisation of structure, method and context of material taught. Therefore, in the multicultural climate of the East Kimberley increasing the number of indigenous people on school staff can be of great value in bridging the cultural gaps between the indigenous students and the western curriculum and between indigenous and non indigenous East Kimberley people.

Qualified Aboriginal teachers who might teach the standard school syllabus are in short supply. The urgent need for local people to train as qualified teachers was voiced mainly by younger people.

> "Teacher aides can only go to a certain extent - they're like the meat in the sandwich for the teacher and the students isn't he? or she?"
>
> Young man, outlying community, N4

All respondents, however, recognised or commented on the essential nature of the teacher aide role in promoting understanding between the different cultural groups involved in education. To date the difficulties of training as a fully qualified teacher appear to have been so great that the possibility often does not seem to people to be a viable one; no more than a dream.

Interviewees who were themselves teacher aides were of course well aware of the needs and problems. One need expressed concerned the relative lack of Aboriginal men in the teaching profession and the need for their presence in schools.

(d) Mix and communicate.

Many comments were made on the need for direct communication by teachers with the local population. People suggested:

> Come out and talk with us.
>
> Tidja i kin djidan an larn wen i kamap. Mibala garra tidjum langgus - i kin larnim langa buk tu; wi kin teigum la bus.
> *When teachers get here they can settle down and learn about things. We'll teach them the language - and they can learn from books too. We can take them out in the bush [and teach them].*
>
> Outstation respondent
>
> Send teachers into traditional communities for a period of two weeks orientation.
>
> Community respondent
>
> Teachers should stay, listen and learn; old people can teach them - show them paintings - so they can understand about Aboriginal ideas.
>
> Outstation respondent
>
> Get mixed up with the people; talk to the people.
>
> Town respondent
>
> Have regular seminars; mix and cooperate.
>
> Town respondent
>
> Visit communities for a week or so to find out about the lifestyle before starting work in the community.
>
> Community respondent

Ideas such as those quoted above were put forward again and again by traditional people in outstations, communities and fringe camps, and by townspeople as well. As the following comments from individual interviewees illustrate, they emphasise the need for teachers to mix in and meet people, in particular to meet and interact with traditional people:

Go out into the families; get to know them, especially Perth teachers.

Mix; join in; go to ceremonies; sit and talk; discuss things with people.

Additional suggested strategies to provide intercultural understanding include the furthering of local development in the following areas:

(i) Sporting functions and facilities.

(ii) Cultural activities. Funding of the Arts et cetera in towns and communities should be such that the Aboriginal enterprises are encouraged. Examples offered included:-

Art and Craft

Cultural festivals

Music; traditional, country and western folk music developments.

Rodeos and stockwork skills, and Aboriginal skills exhibitions etc.

Aboriginal components of country Aboriginal shows, races, and so on.

Use of print, audio and visual media to promote and inform on aspects of Aboriginality should be funded. This must have Aboriginal control, input and involve planning and development.

PRIORITY II : IMPROVE STANDARD AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH LEVELS. ACKNOWLEDGE AND PROVIDE FOR DIVERSE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

There is a need to improve the level of competence of Aboriginal people in Standard Australian English and maintain a knowledge (and appreciation of) traditional language and culture.

> "In my day we used to speak our own lingo when school was finished, but tideina[1] you can't get these kids to talk lingo, they like speaking half-a-English ...."
>
> 38 year old community leader,
> outstation group T121029

> "The main thing is English because it is spoken all over the world."
>
> 55 year old bidialectal mother and
> grandmother, Wyndham T172511

> "For mindubala dota - mindubala garra grentjildren, yuno. Wi wan skul for samthing for larn for mai daughter an son, grentjildren for mindubala ... wi want tjildrin iya na, in det steishun wi garrim deya lan, dei kin larn bothwei; Inglidj and Muriny patha. ...dei mait wandu larn waitmenwei, Inglidj, an mos, wi want owawei mos.
>
> "Inglidj dei kin larn, yes; mos; dei larnim owawei, langgus, evrithing, kalitja; nevalus."
> *"We have grandchildren you know, our daughters' children. We want a school for the children of our sons and daughters - our grandchildren, so they can learn things ... we want a school built in that outstation where our land is , where they can learn both ways, English and Muriny patha ... they might want to learn the white ways, learn English, and most of all we want our way. Most of all.*
>
> *"English they can learn, yes. Most important though they must learn our ways - language, culture; everything and never lose it."*
>
> Spokeswoman, mid 40s, north eastern
> outstation. KT12091

---

[1] Nowadays

PRIMARY STRATEGY SUGGESTED TO ADDRESS PRIORITY II: The two-way approach

All parents aspire to their children having a pride and confidence in their own culture and traditional heritage and, without losing this, their gaining the knowledge and skills of the mainstream society that will bring the Aboriginal community to an equal social and economic footing with the non-Aboriginal community.

The two-way approach will mean that the school in effect is working with the parents rather than against them, in an effort to build competent and well adjusted young people. Such an approach must:

- provide more effective teaching of Standard English in the region.
- acknowledge and provide for diverse language and cultural backgrounds in schools.

The two aspects of language needs are interdependent. That is, improved standard English levels can only be achieved when English teaching programmes recognise, take into account, and build on the non English language and cultural background of students in the region.

The cultural concepts on which the mainstream curriculum is based are part of the background of the teachers. There are differences of fundamental importance between teachers' cultural background, and that of the Aboriginal students. Recognition of this fact and its importance will enable educationists to take the first steps in developing an appropriate diversity of programmes to better prepare students for confident participation in both home community and the wider society.

1. Teachers and curriculum developers need first to find and recognise local expertise in the area of language and communication, then to facilitate interest in collaborative work to document areas of difficulty. This work must be done in the region.

2. Courses in Standard English and local languages and culture should be based on the more appropriate premise of teaching English as a second language, or second dialect.

Improving the level of competence of East Kimberley Aboriginal people in Standard Australian English applies most urgently to those people living in communities, outstations and fringe settlements. Their parents and grandparents in earlier times maintained the greater degree of cultural integrity and were not aligned with the invading culture. These are the groups who are most tradition-orientated today. Such people see an immediate priority in the need for students to achieve literacy and numeracy, in order to acquire further skills.

> "Another area that's been greatly missed, sad to say, by teachers, is ... *how to speak properly, how to use English words properly*, which had been sadly missed, I think."
>
> Nagarra, P.C., 39 year old multilingual literate mother traditional community 300 km south of Hall's Creek

To improve the competence of Aboriginal students in Standard Australian English will require the development of new directions in teaching strategies and curriculum, recognising the existence of traditional languages and Kimberley Creole. While a new approach must be adopted by teachers and students, in towns as well as in more isolated settlements, different traditional language groups in different situations will require the development of different language programmes. This is the job of a Language Centre and/or community annexes of it.

SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATOIN STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY II:

The two-way approach should consist of:

1. Aboriginal people teaching about Aboriginal matters in the schools and tertiary institutions of the region;

2. employment and training of local Aboriginal people as teachers, and these teachers teaching the mainstream syllabus in schools, utilising their unique amalgam of teacher training and local social, cultural and linguistic competence to modify, direct and enhance the basic syllabus for the better comprehension of the content by Aboriginal students; and

3. non-Aboriginal and non-Kimberley people involved in education becoming more informed and aware of the language, culture and day-to-day problems of their students, in order to teach the mainstream syllabus more effectively.

   The Aboriginal component of two-way education must not be taken over by Gadiyas. Traditional people must be in control of this.

   'Keep the language side separate'

   some people told us. That is, recording and development of language and language related matters is best done in a Language Centre as a separate exercise.

   In no way must a necessary recognition of, and in some locations teaching of, other languages detract from the quality of teaching of Standard Australian English.

4. In communities where traditional language is a viable language in daily use it will mean a traditional language component in the school syllabus. This may take the form of either oral learning only or oral and written learning where a local language prevails as it does at Balgo for example.

5. In such communities, the setting up of a centre where Adults may work on language matters and together with mainstream educators develop an appropriate ongoing curriculum and teaching strategies (as is now happening at Balgo, for example).

6. The setting up in the towns of Language Centres where similar work appropriate to town needs can be carried out and which can serve as central service outlying language/Adult Education centres. Such centres can also serve as libraries and archives, a repository for the new information which in such a plan must surely accumulate

through historical, linguistic and other social-scientific documentation of the region. This in turn will be used in developing overall curricula, teaching aids and strategies for teaching other botanical, zoological or geographical knowledge.

7. The establishment, in any tertiary institution which may be planned for the region, of a regional studies component of courses offered, which can be used as an induction course for non-Kimberley people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) coming to work in the region. There should be in such an institution the possibility of conducting seminars on the historical, traditional and cultural aspects of the region.

A Positive Approach to Kriol

> "It's like a national dialect ..."
>
> T111035

While using Kriol as language of first literacy is regarded as inappropriate and unacceptable by most respondents as far as classes in major town schools are concerned, it is evident that it is an everyday communication medium in those same towns.

Children from traditional homes in communities and town fringe camps where Kriol is the main language may benefit most from a Kriol language programme in the early years of school, or from a Kriol/English/traditional language discrimination approach if this could be developed. More exploratory and experimental research is urgently needed in this area. There are no advantages in importing Kriol programmes directly from the Northern Territory as they may be different in vocabulary and syntax from the local Kimberley Creole - as English already is. However the Northern Territory experience should be investigated in relation to the East Kimberley requirements.

The alarming comprehension gap perceived between teachers and students needs immediate attention.

> "White people can't understand Kriol; Aboriginals can't understand High English"
>
> Town mother T322361

The results of this research show that it is essential that appropriate recognition in curriculum and in teaching be given to this aspect of regional culture.

It is essential that teachers coming to the region should know about this form of language, seen in its 'light' form as a dialect, and recognised by linguists as a language in its 'heavy' form, spoken usually in isolated communities and outstations, but also in some town fringe camps and settlements.

Changes need to be at all levels. Education policy for the region should be based on a recognition and awareness of the bicultural nature of the region.

Both schools and the community need to be involved in the implementation of the following suggested strategies.

1. In the teaching of English and the mainstream curriculum.

   (a) Employment and training of more Aboriginal people of the region as teachers and teaching assistants,

   (b) Employment of liaison persons from the community in the schools. Non-attendance must be reduced: the more frequently a child comes to school, the less are her/his English language problems.

   (c) Language and crosscultural awareness courses are essential for all trainee teachers in order to bring about more informed and constructive attitudes and awareness of the need to break new ground and institute similar courses in the schools.

   (d) Linguistics courses for trainee teachers.

   (e) Adult classes in literacy should be established.

   (f) Involvement of East Kimberley Aboriginal people in the development of (c), (d) and (e).
   Teachers should:

      (i) recognise the existence of traditional languages and Creole and that for many East Kimberley children and their parents both receptive and productive use of Standard English is restricted to interactions with Europeans. To be effective, teaching strategies and curricula must be developed to take cognizance of this fact;

      (ii) slow down and take time with individual points in lessons, not going on to the next point before the first is properly understood by students;

      (iii) discuss points of difficulty and noncomprehension with teacher aides, and

      (iv) capitalise more on the ability of Aboriginal teachers and teaching assistants to translate non-Aboriginal teacher talk; make better use of their facility with traditional languages and/or Creole and their competence in local knowledge to translate, interpret and liaise between teacher and student. Delegate responsibility to them. This is particularly important in the primary school.

   (g) Teacher selection should be on the basis of suitability to teach in a multilingual bicultural region where the majority of the school population is not of the mainstream culture.

   (h) Homework classes should be instituted with tutorial assistance available for children whose parents and home situation cannot easily foster the development of Standard (High) English and mainstream learning skills. Such classes should not be restricted to secondary school students, and need to be run along culturally acceptable lines.

(i) There should be more emphasis on specific aspects of English; for example, phonology, syntax and vocabulary.

(j) There should be more emphasis on song, prose and poetry reading, drama and role playing in the teaching of English.

(k) Development of curricula in the region which recognise and make use of the basic differences between the speech the children bring with them when they come to school, and the official language of the education system, Standard Australian English.

(l) The structure and social functions of Kimberley Creole must be investigated and a curriculum developed for use in schools of the area to clarify the differences between Kimberley Creole, and Standard Australian English. Such a curriculum should have as its goal the establishment as early as possible in the children of the region the skill of switching to Standard English when desired or appropriate.

(m) Strategies and curricula should be appropriate to each student population; that is, a diversified approach is necessary.

(n) Schools should encourage parent involvement - parents and parent bodies should expect and be expected to take a more active part in the decision making processes in the schools and to participate at every level of school activities. Schools should regularly invite such participation.

(o) There should be more 'Open Days', and community/school joint activities involving the Aboriginal Community by direct invitation.

2. Traditional culture and language education must be an educational goal. Suggested strategies for introducing traditional language education:

   1. The place of traditional languages in the region is already established (see Kimberley Language Resource Centre report) and must be recognised by education authorities. This will require language courses of different types to be established in schools.

   2. Town schools should institute regional Aboriginal Tradition and Language, that is Aboriginal Studies, programmes on a regular basis.

   3. Such classes should not occupy a large proportion of the school programme but should be regular and assessable.

   4. Such Aboriginal Studies classes should be part of the social studies core curriculum in the primary school and in the secondary school. (Also Aboriginal Studies should have a place in the school curriculum of the wider Australian community as well as in the region).

5. Aboriginal Studies courses in the schools of the region must be carefully planned if they are to be effective. The teachers should be local Aboriginal people selected by the community, working with the cooperation of class teachers.

6. Community members who conduct Aboriginal Studies courses should be paid as teachers.

7. Such classes are suggested as a strategy whereby not only students, but also the European teaching staff, can learn about local culture, language and history. This is an opportunity to begin an exciting and innovative community education and community research initiative.

8. Resources must be made available for these classes to be conducted in a venue appropriate to the lesson, and in the manner deemed appropriate by the traditional teacher. (See F.N. page 129, following quote T311595 previous page.)

9. In town schools Aboriginal traditional languages may best be offered as a regular option. These options should be in the charge of traditional speakers, offered to the children of the appropriate tribal group and interested others. These would be in addition to the Aboriginal Studies core courses above.

10. Communities and outstations where traditional language is spoken want the languages maintained and feel that the school has a role to play in their maintenance. These communities wish to involve community members in the work of developing language programmes and in teaching them regularly in the school. In some communities (for example, Balgo, Turkey Creek) this is already happening. In others it is not (for example, Wangkatjungka Community at Krungal (Christmas Creek), Billiluna, Malan and many outstations).

11. Few East Kimberley languages have been documented to the stage of a developed range of literacy and teaching materials being available for formal teaching either to native speakers or to those learning a second language. Many respondents in this survey suggested the involvement of literacy workers in a community based Cultural Centre (such as the planned Kimberleys Language Resource Centre or annex of it). It is in such a place that local speakers, linguists and educationalists should work together to document language and culture. Such information can form a basis for courses in schools of the region and in the Kimberley Community College proposed below. Schools using materials from such a Centre are thus in a position to work together with students at the forefront of the research field itself, contributing information they may learn from traditional language teachers in their lessons to the general fund of information being built up about the people and language of the region.

12. 'The Aboriginal tradition' component of two-way education in the school must be taught, both in towns and in outlying communities, by those people qualified best to teach it - that is, traditionally oriented community members, with the full support of school staff. Gadiyas must not take over.

> Aboriginal teachers coming into the schools to teach have the effect of increasing the community's familiarity with the school, the staff and the system.

In community and outstations such involvement of community people in education is strongly desired. At Turkey Creek and Balgo, community involvement along these lines has already begun. In Turkey Creek a traditional teacher told me of the involvement of the school in producing language material for use at the multi-cultural Nulungu Secondary College in Broome.

Most traditional communities as well as town communities emphasised the main purpose of the school as being to teach English literacy and associated mainstream skills, but emphasised their attitude that these things must be taught to the young in addition to not instead of traditional cultural and language knowledge. Teaching should proceed from the known word of the child, to the unknown; from local knowledge to broader knowledge.

PRIORITY III : PROVIDE ON-SITE EDUCATION

Young children need to be with their parents, parents and teachers need to have confidence in each other, and young people in the region must acquire skills immediately relevant to helping their commmunities become self sufficient.

> "All this second mob, see, they've never been out much la[1] law, they bin all go school. High and high they might be getting you know, cleverer, and they might just say: well bugger my old people now; we're happy going our own way now. A lot of people, y'know, Gadiya took them away; and now, they don't want their own relations, you see; their own uncles and fathers; [they] don't sort of know them. That's why we want to start like what we're doing in this community now, we're starting all these kids going to school here, teaching them some [traditional] language so they can talk with people here ......"
>
> "Nugud tok ala taim Gadiya wei, Inglidj olataim[2]... Alla skulkid going to school now; we can teach them language so [if they go away for schooling later] when they come back to the community they kin talk their own language, and when they go la Gadiya they talk English. But they shouldn't lose the language of the Aboriginal people, any community.
>
> "So when they come back they know the traditional dances, and they can know what the old people did, long ago ....
>
> "The youngfela[s] went away before; they go to school, and finish up. Never ... finished properly so they can stay in the community and work, run the book and everything, run all our pay and be community advisor for their own people. We want our own people in the community - all the young people - to work hard in the book[s] so they can know what's going on. What the Government story is; so they can read it out to the old people. And we'll have all these young people working the shop, running our own community shop, get the

---

1. La - at, to, with
2. *It's bad if they speak like white people always, English always ....*

> stores ordered and all the things like that, all the other things what Gadiya does there now. That's what they'd like to do."
>
> From mixed Kriol/English statement
> from a father of eight, Health worker,
> erstwhile head stockman,
> northern community T27140

PRIMARY STRATEGY TO ADDRESS PRIORITY III

Provide on-site education.

While there is no doubt that many people in the region in both town and outlying communities favour the option of going away for education for some youngsters, in general people like to have their children with them. Hence they would prefer education in all its forms, from pre-primary and primary through to technical to be available on-site or, in the case of tertiary, in the region.

In the secondary and post-secondary area, (and this covers all young people over primary school age) the emphasis is on the need for school or study/work integrated programmes. These must be on-site programmes. There is great concern with the needs of this age group. Many young people have dropped out of school in the early secondary years; some have settled into apathy.

> "Signs for jobs, like for bulldozer driver, say you have to be qualified person; you've got to be qualified ... but we haven't got the training ... My kids didn't do any training courses - they only take two or three from each town. My boys have just given up."
>
> 40 year old mother, northern town.
> T41626

Others who have dropped out of school some years ago now feel the need for further training:

R.H. "My two big boys, they say 'oh Mum I wish we had the training'. Now they all want to go back, all them young people."

Interviewer "What can be done about it?

R.H. "Like I said; a Community College in Kununurra."

SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY III

(a) Pre primary, primary

1. Where the need exists and the group desires it, on-site schooling should be set up, either as a small one- or two-teacher caravan/bough shade school or some form of mobile outreach classroom from the nearest major school, or from central independent education organisation.

2. Literate people in small settlements who wish to do so should be assisted to take up a teaching role with primary school children, teaching basic literacy and numeracy.

3. Such people should be supported by an adequate infrastructure of resource personnel and resources through both school and Adult Language/Cultural centre in the nearest town or community.

4. Resources, research and development of curricula should be provided in the central Language and Cultural Centre or annexes of it to enable a quality two-way education programme to be established in such localities. This will necessitate the creation of jobs in language centres, and the provision of the necessary equipment for language and cultural recording to take place.

5. All such work must be under the control and direction of local Aboriginal community people.

6. School bus services should be instituted where practicable, to bus children to the nearest major school.

7. Parent involvement must be sought by pre-schools and schools. New schools should be situated where the community prefers, and parents should be encouraged to come in and out of the school at all times, to encourage their children, and take part in the teaching if desired.

8. More local Aboriginal assistance must be sought in existing town schools. One teacher aide per classroom is desirable.

(b) Secondary Education, Post secondary education.

1. Where requested, secondary education and post secondary education should be available in major communities.

2. Such education should provide study/work integrated programmes of a high standard and local relevance. Such programmes should be aimed at equipping youngsters with reading and maths skills adequate to cope in the wider society and to constitute a basis for developing further skills usable locally in work and leisure, as well as in intellectual and personal development. Secondary and post-secondary education programmes should produce confident young people equipped with some work experience and the skills needed in the development of their communities.

3. People want to see more options available to young people in high school and post high school courses. There is heavy emphasis placed on the need for the teaching of business and management skills, trade skills and training in the caring professions such as health and nursing, social and legal workers, as well as teachers.

   At the high school level this means in particular the options of typewriting, book-keeping and associated skills, as well as trade skills. Many people feel that the talents of children in the area of art and music need more fostering than has been possible and see this as leading to productive and satisfying use of leisure time. Likewise the development of sports skills and sporting facilities is noted as important.

All these needs presuppose a more carefully controlled and rigorous approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and a higher rate of regular participation in the primary years.

4. Community and outstation people would like to see hostel accommodation for outlying community high school students provided at major centres in the region with the involvement of Aboriginal people on staff. Town and community parents would like to see Aboriginalisation of hostel staff and more adequate pastoral care for students in some city hostels.

5. Outlying community respondents indicated the need for post high school trades training centres in the towns for students from traditional backgrounds. This would also require hostel accommodation with good supervision, adequate recreation facilities and Aboriginal staffing. In all the major communities in the south and west of the region the suggestion was made that there should be high school, post high school and hostel facilities available to community people in Hall's Creek, a town central to many communities in this area and within reasonable distance of the students' homes.

   A hostel and secondary school (to year 10) already exist in this town. Little use is made of either by traditional people in the region. The recent appointment of an East Kimberley Aboriginal hostel manager is in line with Aboriginal thinking and may indicate a new approach. The potential is there for the development of a vital community education facility in this central town, building on facilities already there, to provide a network of necessary and diversified education services to outlying communities.

6. Years 11 and 12 should be available on site in towns.

7. Standards should be maintained at a level comparable to that in city schools.

8. Homework classes for children of all ages staffed, at least in part, by local Aboriginal parents.

9. More Aboriginal teachers and teacher aides.

10. Liaison persons should be appointed at each town school to facilitate communication between home and school and students and teachers.

11. There must be involvement of the community in community schools, on the staff as teachers/teacher aides, and traditional teachers. Schools should be flexible to community lifestyles - timetabling for traditional ceremonies and so on.

12. Formal and regular participation by communities in education; school boards, committees.

    Each school to involve the community formally by consulting with a school board or parent committee. Communities ought to make sure that they can represent their point of view to the school through such a committee. Through such a body the parents can participate in school affairs.

(c) **Provision of post secondary trades, technical and tertiary education in the region.**

As discussed earlier, priorities lie in the following areas:

1. Establishment of centres in communities and towns where young and older adults can further their education in a variety of areas with the development and provision of:

   - On-the-job training programmes.
   - Short courses at a Community Adult Education Centre.
   - Longer courses for adults at such Centres which can be undertaken on site.
   - Education for leisure - recreation needs.

2. Establishment of a tertiary institution in the Kimberley region to cater for community adult education needs. The provision of correspondence courses or a combination of correspondence/short 1-2 week blocs at a Kimberley Tertiary centre was especially favoured by teacher aides and other married persons who cannot easily uproot to go away for study due to family commitments.

Adult Education, Tertiary Education

Courses in a variety of skills should be provided through Adult Learning Centres, Community Centres or Language and Cultural Centres in each major town and community.

1. On-the-job training programmes are needed in all areas of trades, maintenance work, radio work, stock work. Young adults should be taught as adult learners; poor numeracy and literacy skills should be no bar to adult learning. The relevance of numeracy and literacy to the job is incentive to learn these skills if presented by adults to adults, without patronisation and with adult obligations and responsibilities accepted on both sides.

2. Short and longer courses should be offered in a variety of skills. The most urgent need in all communities is perceived to be for book-keeping and accounting, motor mechanics and general maintenance work.

   Older people as well as younger people are interested in literacy, some at the basic level of learning to write their name, some to extend an already acquired skill further.

3. Traditional language maintenance, renewal and retrieval is important to Aboriginal people of the region. The development of Language Centres/Cultural Centres as part of an Adult learning complex, is a logical place for literacy skills to be taught.

4. In all Adult Learning programmes, Aboriginal participation at a staff level, where local skills are available, is essential and desired.

5. Language and Cultural centres must be the places where language curricula are developed and prepared for adults, in training courses, and for children in schools. Documentation of language and culture must proceed with the employment and training of Aboriginal people in the necessary techniques - reading, writing, recording, use of video, film , printing machines - and at the same time employment and training of Gadiya in the traditional languages, manners and customs of the region.

6. The tertiary education needs of the region might be best met in the region at a community college where courses are available for the general population, Aboriginal and non Aboriginal. Part of the function of such an institution should be to provide courses and seminars on the indigenous culture of the Aboriginal people of the region, to foster and further goodwill and understanding.

PRIORITY IV : RECREATION NEEDS; EDUCATION FOR LEISURE

> "The main problems, I feel, are alcohol and lack of leisure facilities for people to occupy their pastime; there is no funding from Government for these."
>
> R N., 24 year old trilingual trainee
> book-keeper and mother of pre-primary
> and primary aged children; northern town.

> "If people don't talk to each other we'll never get anywhere. You've got to have some sort of ground where everyone can sit down and talk to one another, where town people and outstation people and reserve people can get together. You have to be careful that town people don't lose contact with groups."
>
> R.I. 35 year old (approx) father
> T151043

PRIMARY STRATEGY SUGGESTED TO ADDRESS PRIORITY IV:

Provide support for cultural artistic and sporting needs through community centres and other ventures.

SPECIFIC IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR PRIORITY IV

1. Training in skills relating to cultural activities - art, drama, music, both traditional Aboriginal skills (by traditional people) and modern skills and techniques by appropriate skilled people.

2. It is essential that as well as capital investment in musical equipment in schools (and this must include provision for control, maintenance and housing of equipment) there must be provision for regular teaching for optimum effectiveness of programmes.

3. Programmes should be devised so that high school students can make use of equipment after normal school hours. (for example in the style of Wyndham Secondary School).

4. Training in the organisational, management and marketing skills needed in any ventures such as public performance of music or sale of art and craft.

5. Training in the skills necessary, literacy and technical, to develop a body of expertise in using modern means of transmitting culture through the electronic media, as well as print media.

6. Continued support for Aboriginal cultural developments is essential, this should be allocated with proper consultation.

7. Development of skills for leisure - music; sport; craft. Resources, equipment, and buildings are only part of what is needed. Adequate staff, involvement of local Aboriginal people, and relevant and appropriate structure of learning to attract and maintain interest is essential. This can only be achieved when there is adequate control for responsibility delegated by funding bodies to Aboriginal bodies.

8. Youth leader training should be available.

9. Youth club activities for younger children should be funded, supported and appropriate in all major towns and communities.

10. Small 'neighbourhood type parks' should be made on vacant land so small children are encouraged to play near their homes.

APPENDIX I: National Aboriginal Education Committee Categories of Living Situations of Indigenous Australians

APPENDIX I

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE
CATEGORIES OF LIVING SITUATIONS OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS:

Category I	Traditionally Orientated Communities People who have the greatest geographic and social separation from the rest of Australian society (they will have some degree of economic connection). These people are also the most traditionally orientated.
Category II	Rural Non-Traditional Communities This group also has considerable social and geographic separation from the rest of Australian society, but are not so highly traditionally orientated as Category I people.
Category III	Urban Communities These people are highly geographically and economically embedded in non indigenous society, but, because of their community social organisation, they have considerable social separation. This group is likely to be less traditionally orientated than Category I, and to some extent, Category II.
Category IV	Urban Dispersed This group is highly socially, economically and geographically embedded in the non indigenous Australian society. This group would also be expected to exhibit the least traditional orientation.

Source: NAEC submission to the National Inquiry into Teacher Education, 1979.

APPENDIX II: The Sample

APPENDIX II

THE SAMPLE

The viewpoints and suggested strategies detailed in this report come from two sources; group meetings and individual interviews. The group meetings varied from large gatherings of 50 or so people to small family groups in some isolated places. Comment was gathered at these meetings by the use of:

1. notetaking,
2. tape recording,
3. small group discussions with small group leaders jotting contributed ideas on large sheets of paper.

The individual interview sample may be described in the following ways.

(1) Number of respondents of each sex.

Women	Men
53	30

(2) Ages of respondents.

Age	Women	Men	Total
16 - 35	32	16	48
36 - 50	15	8	23
51+	6	6	12
TOTAL	53	30	83

(3) Location of respondents according to living situation.

Town residents	Fringe settlement residents	Community residents	Outstation settlers
28	13	30	12
TOTAL 41		TOTAL 42	

(4) Respondents according to degree of schooling.

Degree of Schooling	Age*			Total
	16 - 35	36 - 50	51+	
None	1	10	8	19
Primary	9	11	4	24
Secondary	39	-	-	39
TOTAL	49	21	12	82

* Some ages are estimated.

Thirteen respondents had spent 1 or more years schooling outside the Kimberley region.

Two respondents had completed year 12.

Some respondents listed as achieving years 9 and 10 began school as late as 13 years old; some others noted that they had not been in "the academic" stream. In other words real level of achievement is probably very variable.

The following people contributed to the project in individual interviews. Respondents are listed by kin group name where known, or if they have one, and their age is given. All contributors to the study were of Aboriginal descent.

Djanama	70
Djangala	58
Djungara	50+
Djularma	50+
Djampin	50+
Djangari	50+
Djangari	50+
man s.n.r.	44
man n.s.	44
man n.s.	41
Djangari	middle aged
Djangala	38
Djabalyi	35+
man n.s.r.	30s
man n.s.	30/31
Djubrulla	30
Djabalyi	30
Djampin	29
Djangari	25
Djakarra	24
Jularma	24
Djakarra	21
Djungara	21
Djabidja	20
man n.s.r.	20s
Djimidj	18
man n.s.	18
Djangala	18
woman	71
Nyawana	61
Namira	60+
Nanagu	60+
Nangala	55
Nakarra	50+
Nakarra	45+
Nyawaru	45
woman n.s.	43
Nangala	40-50
Nanagu	40-50
Nakarra?	40+
Nangari	40+
Napangari	40
Napangari	middle aged
Nakarra	39
Nangala	38
Nyawadjeri	36
woman n.s.	36
woman n.s.	36
Nampin	35-40
Nakarra	35ish
Nakarra	35
Nakarra	35
Nyandyili	35
woman n.s.	35
woman n.s.	32
Nyawana?	32
Nangala	32
Nungareyi	30ish
Nangala	30
Nangari	28
woman n.s.	27
Ŋakarra	26
woman n.s.	26
Nampidjin	25
Nyawuru	25
Namira	25
Namidj	25
woman n.s.r.	25
Nakamarra	24
Nangala	23
Nyandyili	23
Nyawuru?	23
Nawula	23
Napanangka	22ish
Nangala	22
Napaltjari	21?
Nakarra	20
Nangala	19
Namira	19
Namitja	19
Nangala	18
Nyawadjari	17
Nangala	17
Napanangka	16

12 people did not have a kin category or did not know it (see text).

s.n.r. - s(kin) category name not recorded.

n.s. - no s(kin) category.

APPENDIX III: Outstation Statement

APPENDIX III

OUTSTATION STATEMENT

This meeting was held in Yagga Yagga about schools, problems, an its been going for couple o' months; we had two ladies going round everywhere round countryside, visiting every community. Today this was held in Yagga Yagga - we got new place out here - for talk about school.

This is Number 1

We should have a school here, little school for the little kids; school in Balgo is OK but we want more support; I mean the council should control that school over there, councils, or church councils or whatever - school committee what's in Balgo, they should control it and look after it an make the Balgo school more stronger, so the kids can go to school in Balgo properly.

This is very new to us, we didn' expecting this, an we starting to think about it and how can we help our people and how can we set up a really school for our people, around the Kimberley, the north; Kimberley. Anyhow I only can tell you what my worries is, what I thinkin; what I thinking for my mob, for Yagga Yagga group, sometime I always want to talk about Balgo school too, because I'm gonna send my kids to school in Balgo.

We'd rather have a high school or some school going on in - for our people when they finish school - to carry on; more like high school..... We should have a school close by, like placed in Hall's Creek so's our people can learn more; so they can finish the high school at close distance, not right down in Pundulmarra, or Rossmoyne.

We are very sorry that we see a lot of young people go to school and don't want to go back and learn more.

We know that that [is] because they miss their parents and their family and friends. for these sort of things we want to see a couple o' things changed at least. It won't come straight away, but we want to see a school, a high school, should be set up for our country people, for outback, in Hall's Creek; so our parents from - like from place like Gordon Downs or Sturt Creek or ... kids parents from Billiluna, Yagga Yagga, Balgo, Malan, Yiyili and some other close community could come and see their children in Hall's Creek. If they could set up a high school to finish their schooling; they should build a high school in Hall's Creek for our young people.

This is Number 2

So when the kids is finished high school, we should have nother school in Hall's Creek, or somewhere like this, close by, if they can learn more about motor mechanics, typing and reading, how to become a good lawyer, all that other things. They should have another school up there, too, for grown up men who left school, what know read and write properly, so they can help their community. So they can come back and help their community. That's only from my mind, what I think.

And other thing is, lot of our peoples going up to Broome, young children going up to Broome; we should have something [closer]; school going on in Hall's Creek for them, high school at least.

I don't want what the other community [ies] think. When we send our kids to Pundulmarra, Nulungu College, some country people go to school and you get some others kids from that area, they walk round in groups and tease other people - tease other kids what come from place like Hall's Creek or place like Balgo or from Turkey Creek. And them groups tease them - them blokes what live round in Broome or somewhere, like in Pundulmarra. That's why the other kids can't go to school; our kids, for us, when they do their course, and they want to finish off properly, they got 5 or 6 years to go, they don' want to do it; that's why they take off. Because all them fights an arguments or teasing is going on. But we just want to see a small high school in Hall's Creek, we want to see that, and a couple of changes in that - this big school where big - grown up - well educated people to be learning typing and all the other things what I mentioned before. That sort of thing we want to see like close by. In Hall's Creek at least. So that's all I got to say.

Here again. This is Number 3 now

We know that school in Balgo is going on. We know the big school there, couple o' schools going down there in Balgo and we want to see it going good, but ah the other thing is we don't see it; Catholic people don't see it, we don't see it, because we don't talk about it. Now we've got this Billiluna - I mean - you've got this Lake Gregory out there, and you've got now the children's going to Balgo; the Lake Gregory and Billiluna kids going to Balgo.

Well they got to have a dormitory to live in. And somebody to control them, not just Sister Mac [alone]; somebody to look after the girls properly, and they should have committee, school council, they should have really school council to straighten the - help the school with young girls and grown up girls and for the grown up men. And in Balgo they should have a dormitory for the boys, so they can sleep and eat, place there they want too in one place.

So ... if they want to look after own kids, they gotta get - married missionary will be there but we want to see our Blakbala lookin after our dormitory, Aboriginal man and woman. Same thing goes for the Aborigine woman and man to go look after the - help the sister along with girls, so they can look after so they can go to school and they can be in time to go back to beds.

Because we worried about some of the things and problems that we have going on in Balgo already about school kids; we're worried about that.

But one day if the Balgo and Yagga Yagga and Malan mob come together and talk about these problems, about school, and setting it up, we might get something done.

If Bishop and the community, three community [ies] come together to talk about this dormitory, and talk about the kids from Malan and Yagga Yagga kids and Balgo kids and the school, and place where they can live and go to school; because we want to get word about it. If our kids go to school in Balgo, they'll go away from our controlling. We can't control em from here, from Yagga Yagga.

We gotta have - make some sort of rules up there, to look after our kids, to look after our kid - when they going up to school in Balgo. That sort of thing; we want to talk about it. We want to get together and talk about it. That's why I can't even let my kids go to school up to Balgo. I still got my kids in Yagga Yagga.

So I want to see - good schooling in Balgo. Want to talk about the school and organise it, and make a strong rules, because I don't want to see my daughter or son running all over the place. We want to make a good law and rules for the kids to live in dormitory.

So that's all I'm going to say.

Hello! Here again. Number 4

We don't want to be - I want to say I don't want to see my young people going only to school, but I want to see a two side school going on. I hope you can help on this one, help me on this sort of problem. I'm out here talking in the middle of nowhere.

We've got good school and school set up in Balgo ... I think most of the young people should go up, up to school, and do a lot of fencing. Brother should take them out or someone in charge should take them out, take young people out - young men, fencing or cutting wood or doing something like welding. That's where they'll learn cutting, making fences, or yard[s]. They should take them out and train them too. And we should have another school going on like - taking the young people, showing them how to ride a horse, after school. We should train up good quiet horses, couple of quiet horses in Balgo to learn how to ride - so they can ride a horse; because some of those young fellas don know how to ride a horse they only know how to motor-bikẹ! Now if they got to learn to live on cattle station, they got to learn how to ride a horse too and how to make fences, how to make a yard, and windmill. How to mix up concrete, like - cement, so that sort of thing we gotta look at.

Like you know we got Catholic school here going now we got to have support from Catholic too to give us more ideas, if Catholic - ah like a Bishop can come and talk to us, to each community or if he can make a contact to Hall's Creek community, we can siddown and talk about these sort of things.

So because we don't see Bishop very much, he just comes and goes. He's very busy fellow this man I know. So um we want to see them going to school and we wanna see them doing something, at least working; our young people. Some time before they go to school they gotta go to work; school again, working, that's what I mean.

Well I know many language, me. I've lived with the old people and I know what languages I talk and when I go to another community, I know which language to talk. but in Balgo I talk one language, Kukatja.

In that school, Balgo school, they can read and write; they can learn in English way. but they can read and write and they can learn about English way, can write in English.

Now if you want to start talkin about, if you want to start thinkin about writing in language and all this, no no! You gotta slow down and think, gotta slowdown and think that we got - we want - only one language in Balgo to be written down as Kukatja.

Because first - a long time ago there was one tribe, what came, went over there and settled down, that was the Kukatja tribe. So we want to see that language written down in Kukatja, and we want to see young people writing down - say if I want to say 'uncle' in English, say if I want to say 'uncle' in English, in languages we say *'kanu amar nyanyi, nyamanyi'*. *Nyamanyi* mean in language - it's Kukatja - word mean 'uncle'.

If I want to say 'father' - *wabira*. That's Kukatja language - we want to see that. We want to see that language written down, all in Kukatja - not in Pintubi. Not in Luridji, not in Walbiri. We got all mixed people writing down all their own wrong languages in there.

We all talk one language; it's Kukatja. I don't hear no Pintubi talkin over there. I don't hear no young people talking this and that languages - no, all talking Kukatja. So whoever - whatever young people can read and write well, in Balgo, they should think, and put Kukatja languages.

If I want to say 'auntie', I say *bimirri - kunduli;* I'm sorry, *kunduli*. I gotta say *kunduli*.

If I want to say 'mummy' to my mum, *ngamayi*, or *abidja* , two ways.

If I want to say 'sister' or 'sis', we say *djurdu*.

All the meaning is nearly forgotten. I see it every time I go to Balgo I see it - all writing down in Pintubi - that's wrong! This is not Pintubi land up here, this is all Kukatja country. So I want to see Kukatja, Kukatja written down strongly. And I want to say it, if anybody got any complaint about in Balgo, I'm open. Anybody can talk to me, any big meeting. A white man or a black man can come and talk to me, no worries.

So that's all I was thinking. I want to see a language school, a really good language school, a really good language school going in Balgo. A really Kukatja language.

I might sign off now. See you next time.

LOCATION OF GROUPS VISITED IN THIS SURVEY

Meetings, talks and interviews were held with people from the following locations:

NORTHERN AREA

Towns and associated groups:
WYNDHAM
Guda Guda
Kununurra
Bethel Sanctuary
Nallywah
Mirima
Moongoong Darwoong

Communities:
Kalumburu
Oombulgurri

Outstations:
Maralam
Kambaramba

CENTRAL AREA

Towns and associated groups:
HALL'S CREEK
Lunja
Yardgee
Blueberry Hill
Nicholson group

Outlying communities and outstations:
Warmun Community Turkey Creek
Bungle Bungle group
Bow River
Kunji
Lamboo
Yiyili

SOUTHERN AREA

Communities:
Billiluna
Balgo
Malan
Wangkatjunka Community, Krungal, Christmas Creek

Outstations:
Yagga Yagga
Yunbu (Jalyirr group)

Contact was also made with Glen Hill, Doon Doon (Dunham River), Frog Hollow and Violet Valley groups but no extended talks or interviews were held in these places due to time restraints.

APPENDIX IV: The Survey Instrument

[illegible]

EDUCATION

ABORIGINAL VIEWPOINTS

You have some very important views on what type of education is badly needed to train our people to be helpful in the community.

Where are our future leaders?
Are you satisfied with how your children are turning out?
What is the most beneficial learning we should be receiving?

Be sure that you make your ideas known to us when we come to your area.

National Centre for Research on Rural Education
University of Western Australia

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the original document was blank.

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LOCALITY **DATE** **MAN**

WOMAN

The answers you give on this questionnaire will help to build up information for a report on Aboriginal people's ideas, needs and problems in education. These question sheets are confidential and only to be used by the research team. They are not to be made public.

1. (a) Skin Group: (b) Name:

(c) Age: (d) Occupation/Status:

2. (a) Where were you born?

(b) Which is your country?

3. (a) Who grew you up?

(b) What different places have you lived
(1) when you were a child?

(2) when you were a young man/girl?

(3) when you were grown up, till now?

4. (a) What position are you in your household? (e.g. mother, father, son, etc.)

(b) Do you have children?

AGE

BOYS:										
GIRLS:										

(c) Are these children at school here or away?

(d) Are you looking after other children as well as your own?

AGE

BOYS:										
GIRLS:										

(e) Are these children at school here or away?

(f) How many people live at your home usually?

5. Can you read and write YES NO A LITTLE

(a) English?

(b) any other language?

6. (a) Did/do your parents want you to go to school?

(b) What is your own feeling about schooling?

(c) Have you been to school? YES NO

If YES,

(1) How old were you when you started school?

(2) Where did you go to school?

(3) What grade did you achieve?

(4) Have you done any training courses since you finished school? YES NO

(5) Did your training help you get a job? YES NO

(6) Are you training at now? YES NO

(7) Are you working at a paid job now? YES NO

(8) If YES, where?

(9) If NO, what type of work would you like?

(10) What jobs have you had before?

7. Who would you go to for information about training?

8. (a) Do you have Aboriginal obligations or jobs to do? YES NO

8. (b) Could you tell me a bit about education of kids and young people in the early days, before the days of schools?

(c) How do children growing up today learn about these things?

(d) Could you tell me a little about the proper ways a woman or man must behave today to be a respected Aboriginal person in this community?

9. (a) **PROBLEMS** As far as education is concerned for Aboriginal people what would you say are are the main problems facing big kids and young people in the East Kimberley today?

9(b) **SOLUTIONS** What changes would you say would help fix up these problems?

People have told us about Pidgin English or Kriol (creole). Some people have called this way of talking Camp English or New English. People might talk heavy or light Kriol.

10. (a) Do you know this way of talking YES NO

(b) When you were a little child, what did you first learn to talk? (Tick which one(s)).

TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE	PIDGIN/CREOLE	ENGLISH

(c) What do you talk now?

(d) What is your mother's first language?

(e) What does your mother talk to you? (f) To older relations?

(g) What is your father's first language?

(h) What does your father talk to you? (i) To older relations?

(j) Do you think children growing up today need to know

(1) traditional language

(2) creole

(3) English

(k) How can schools help children best in teaching about talking/reading and writing?

11. **Would you yourself talk Traditional language, Kriol/Pidgin or English when you talk to these different people?**

Mark **T for Traditional language**

K for Kriol

E for English

Storekeeper

Baby

Young kid

Cousin

Aboriginal Health worker from Derby

Grandfather

Teacher

This is to get an idea of which different ways people talk to each other in this community.

Put
- T for traditional language
- HK for heavy Kriol/Pidgin
- LK for light Kriol/Kimberley English
- E for English/high English

PEOPLE LISTENING

PEOPLE TALKING

	OLD PEOPLE	MIDDLE-AGED	YOUNG ADULTS	KIDS	GARDIYA
OLD PEOPLE					
MIDDLE-AGED					
YOUNG ADULTS					
KIDS					
GARDIYA					

13. **Many people have told us that sometimes there are problems in the East Kimberley because different people do not properly understand each other. Which of these statements would you say is true of this community?**

The gardiya teacher understands when a kid talks to him.

Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Not much	Never

A kid understands when a gardiya teacher talks to him

Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Not much	Never

A teacher understands when 4 or 5 kids are talking in a group

Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Not much	Never

Parents and teachers understand each other properly when they talk together

Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Not much	Never

Old people understand white people's way of talking

Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Not much	Never

Why?

People told us that there is a big gap of understanding between gardiya teachers and community children and parents about each other's ways and ideas.

14. (a) Should European teachers/other government workers learn about Aboriginal lifestyle before they begin work in an Aboriginal community?

(b) What kinds of things should Europeans learn about that would help them to understand Aboriginal people better?

(c) How can the teachers learn about these things?

(d) How can the community help teachers to learn about Aboriginal ways and Aboriginal ideas?

(e) Should the community and the school staff get together to talk about what things are needed to make the school a good one?

(f) Is it better for the community to be

(1) involved in the school and its work?

or

(2) keep out and leave teaching to the teachers?

(g) Should a community give ideas and have power in the forming of policy at the school?

(a) the teaching of local customs, etc, to teachers?
(b) what kind of things they would like school teacher to teach in the school, i.e. type of schoolwork?
(c) what kind of people are good school teachers and how long they should stay?
(d) the way classes and lessons are set up?
(e) the number of Aboriginal people working at the school - the kind of work they should do?
(f) deciding which things to ask for from government?
(g) the spending of school money?
(h) rules for kids?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Here and now in this community:

15. (a) Is there a school board or school council for your community?

YES NO

If YES,

What sort of things does the school council do?

If NO

(b) Who should help to talk about and plan the way the school works/the way a new school or new part of a school is set up?

(c) Should/does the school board or council have a say in the daily running of the school? (For example, discussions about excursions, sporting events, canteen and other functions, etc.)

YES NO

(d) Can a school council help with these things?

(e) How?

(a) the community - school council, parents (granny, anybody)
(b) the school principal
(c) the school teachers
(d) the Education Department
(e) the students
(f) other

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

People have told us that Aboriginal people everywhere would like to know about their own culture and history and about the Aboriginal way of life, and that parents and teachers should work together in growing up kids. What are your ideas?

16. (a) Who can help and how?

(b) Should children learn these things at

(i) Primary School

(ii) High School

(iii) Both

(iv) Neither

(c) Do you think (i) All Aboriginal children

(ii) All Kimberley children

(iii) All Australian children

should have the chance to learn something about Aboriginal languages and culture at school?

(d) Would you like your child to

(i) learn an Aboriginal language at school?

(ii) learn in an Aboriginal language at school?

(iii) have the option of learning an Aboriginal language at school?

(iv) learn about Aboriginal languages and culture at school?

17. (a) I think the biggest education worry for Aboriginal people today in the East Kimberley is with

(i) primary school aged children (young kids)

(ii) secondary school aged students (high school kids)

(iii) people who have left school.

(b) What are the reasons why some children stay away from school?

(c) Why do some parents allow their kids to stay away from school?

(d) What is a good way to get kids to come to school?

(e) Sometimes families travel from their home for various reasons then kids might miss out on school. What ideas have you got about this?

(f) Does gadiya schooling interfere with Aboriginal education? How? How can this be made better?

(g) If you have a 12-14 year old son or daughter, you might want him/her to keep going at high school. Name all the places where he could go to school.

(h) Where would you choose and why?

(i) Would you like to have this child schooled in any other place?

(j) Where and why?

(k) If there is trouble at school and your child tells you he has been punished unfairly what would you do:

- (i) tell him he doesn't have to go to school any more/for a while
- (ii) go and see the teacher about it
- (iii) let him decide himself whether to stay at home
- (iv) leave it, don't worry about it
- (v) other

(l) (a) Is it better in high school to have mixed classes of boys and girls or to have boys only and girls only classes?

(b) Is it important how old the teacher is or whether it is a man or a woman?

18. Last time we were here people told us one of their worries is that when young people finish school they have nothing to do.

(a) What should they be doing?
(b) Why aren't they doing these things?
(c) What can be done about this?
(b) They are not old enough.
(c) Communities don't have any work that needs doing.
(d) They are too spoiled and lazy.
(e) Gadiyas do the work our own people could train for.
(f) There are no paid jobs for them.
(g) They get sit down money without working.
(h) Other reasons.

19. People told us that young people had no chance to learn more about art and music

What do you think is needed?

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All the parents we spoke to wanted their kids to grow up the right way, to be able to look after their family and help in the community when they are big. Young men and women too want to be able to run their own show. People in all communities have said to us that Aboriginal people in the East Kimberley need a good education and training in different kinds of work.

20. **(a)** What kinds of work could a young Aboriginal person do here if he had the right training?

(b) What kinds of training or learning can a person do already in this community?

(c) What other kinds of education/learning/training do you reckon people here would like?

(d) Would you or anyone in your family like to do any of these things or others? Which?

(e) What future would you like to see for this community/outstation /Aboriginal people in this town?

(f) What plans/ideas has the community got for this place?

Getting trained is sometimes difficult in the Kimberleys. Sometimes people would like to do some training but some things worry them. People have told us that some courses are

(a) Too long if away from home

(b) Too far away - No training/learning available or suitable in the home town/community.

(c) Too short.

(d) Not really related to the work they want to do.

(e) Do not give them a certificate for the work they want to do.

(f) Teachers go too fast through the work -
people haven't got time to understand properly.

(g) Often no employment at the end of school or training.

21. (a) Which of these worries do you have? (Please circle numbers)

(b) Can you give me an example of how any of these has affected you or someone in your family?

(c) Do you think you might like to do any learning/training here in your town/community?

- (a) Short courses
- (b) Longer courses
- (c) Part-time courses
- (d) Correspondence courses
- (e) Working and learning on the job
- (f) Reading and writing English

  Traditional language

  Creole

(d) Would you like to help as a teacher or any other way in any training courses for people in your community?

Some people said that they would like a Centre within their community where people could have the opportunity to upgrade their level of education in areas such as

- accounting and bookkeeping
- Aboriginal language and culture
- literacy in English and in Aboriginal languages
- mechanics
- building
- carpentry
- leatherwork
- hairdressing
- sewing
- music
- art

People said to us that local people should be employed as staff where available, and trained on the job to upgrade their work status.

22. (a) What do you think about this idea?

(b) Would you be interested in

(i) Teaching at a place like this?

(ii) Helping in some way at a place like this?

(iii) Learning at a place like this?

(iv) All three?

(c) What ages of people do you think might be interested in a centre like this?

23. Would you or anyone in your family be interested in full time courses at a learning centre of some sort - teachers college, trades school, business training, art, language, culture, etc.?

(a) In the Kimberleys?

(b) Elsewhere?

Some Aboriginal people have suggested that there should be a place in the Kimberley where courses are given for adult people, and where seminars can be held. It was suggested that there is a need for a college where people could learn and study when they have left school. People suggested that a place like this might:

(a) train translators and interpreters

(b) develop and provide language courses
(for Aboriginal people and white people)

(c) train teachers

(d) have trades courses

(e) give short seminars to people about Aboriginal culture

(f) find out about Kimberley Aboriginal culture and language

Aboriginal people would be employed as staff in such an institute, particularly in the development of Aboriginal language and cultural courses, lectures and so on.

24. (a) What do you think of this idea?

(b) Would you or anyone in your family be interested in

(i) Teaching at a place like this?

(ii) Learning at a place like this?

(iii) Helping at a place like this?

(iv) All three?

Some Aboriginal people suggested that a place like that, with Aboriginal staff, could provide courses, training and seminars for Europeans coming to the Kimberley to work in Aboriginal communities.

(c) What do you think of this idea?

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